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# A MAN OF THE PEOPLE.

A Tale of 1848.

BY

MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN.

FROM THE FRENCH.

BY THE TRANSLATOR OF "THE BLOCKADE."

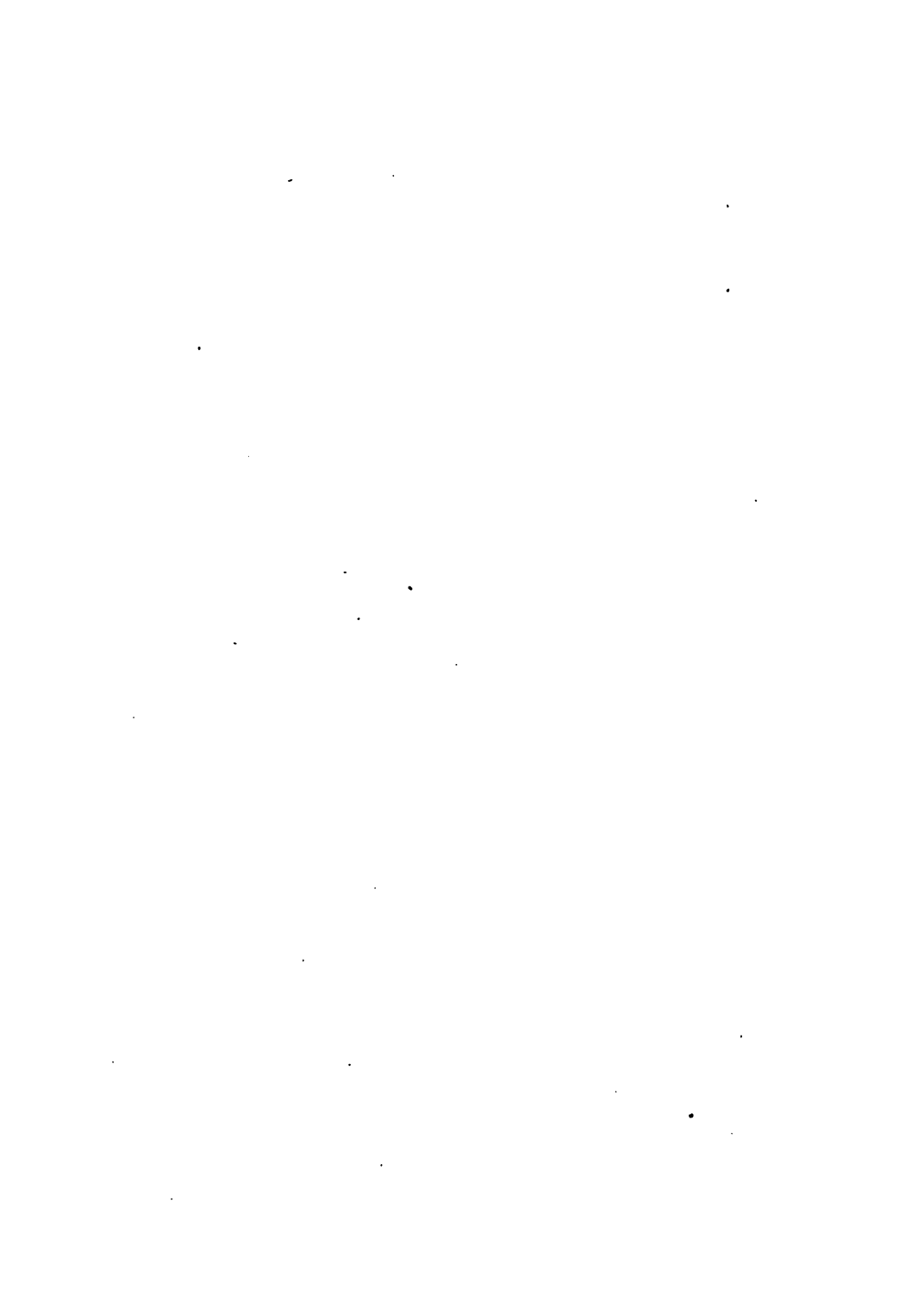
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# A MAN OF THE PEOPLE.

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## CHAPTER I.

**M**Y father, Nicholas Clavel, was a wood-cutter of Saint Jean-des-Choux, near Saverne ; and I was just nine years old when he died, in the month of June, 1837.

Our neighbour, Widow Rochard, kept me with her two or three weeks, but nobody knew what was to become of me. Widow Rochard could not continue to keep me : she said that our goods and our bed, and



all the rest of our things together, would not be enough to pay the funeral expenses, and that it would have been a good thing if my father had taken me into the other world with him.

When I heard her say that, I got frightened, for I thought nobody would have me.

During these three weeks we gathered strawberries in the wood and sold them in the town, and I could very well pick five or six measures in a day ; but the strawberries are soon over, and it is a long while from that to the time when the beechnuts fall in autumn.\*

I was not yet strong enough to carry bundles of faggots, and I often thought, as Widow Rochard did, that it would

\* At this season the lads can earn a trifle by taking herds of swine to feed under the beeches.

have been a good thing if I had died too.

At the end of the three weeks, as we were one morning standing at the door, Widow Rochard cried out—

“Look, there is your cousin Guerlot, the fishmonger. I wonder what he is doing in this part of the country?”

I did look, and saw a stumpy little man, with a fat pock-marked face, with a broad-brimmed hat over his eyes, and gaiters on his short legs.

As he came near, Widow Rochard said—

“Good-day, Monsieur Guerlot;” but he passed by without answering, and pushed open the door of my father’s house.

“Nobody here,” said he, and then opened the shutters.

Almost directly a tall red-haired woman, whose nose was long, and whose face was

flushed, and who was dressed in her Sunday-best, entered after him.

“That is your cousin Hoquart,” said Widow Rochard; “she sells fish too,—if they catch any here they will be clever folks.”

Other people came every minute. First, the Juge-de-paix Dolomieu, from Saverne, and his secretary, M. Latouche; then cousins and aunts of mine, all of them well dressed, and lastly our mayor, M. Binder, with his great three-cornered hat, and his red waistcoat on.

As he passed, Widow Rochard asked him what all those people were doing at Nicholas Clavel’s.

“It is about the child,” he said, stopping and looking at me with a sad expression on his face; and when he saw how ashamed I looked of my torn jacket, my old trousers, and my bare feet, he said,

“ Ah, poor child !” and then went in with the rest.

A few minutes after, Widow Rochard took me in also, to see what was going on ; and I went and sat down in the chimney-corner.

All these people were seated on benches round our old table, quarrelling away, and saying that my father and mother never ought to have married, as they had saved nothing, that they were lazy, and many other things that I knew were false ; for my poor father worked hard till he died.

First one and then the other screamed, but not one of them would take me.

The juge-de-paix was a grave man, with a fine high forehead, and listened to them quietly, except when they bawled too loud, and then he told them they ought to be ashamed of themselves, that I was not the

cause of my own misfortune, and that it was no use to sit there blaming my father and mother ; that people who were unfortunate were to be pitied, even if they had been in fault ; that the care of the child was the first thing to be thought of, and so on. But their tempers grew hotter every time : and as for me I sat in my place like a dead thing.

“ We must come to some arrangement or other, however,” said the juge-de-paix. “ You see this child cannot be left on the parish (*commune*), you are all well off—rich : it would be a disgrace to the family. Come, M. Guerlot, you speak.” Then the fat fish-dealer got up in a rage and said :

“ I have my own children to feed, and that is enough for me—”

“ And I say the same,” screamed the tall carrotty woman. “ I have my own

children to keep, and have nothing to do with other people's."

And then they all rose up, declaring that it was a great shame to have made them lose a day for what did not concern them. The juge-de-paix turned quite pale as he replied :

"This child concerns you, it seems to me, more than he does the parish : he is your own flesh and blood ! If he were rich, and you were his heirs, you would not disown him, I fancy."

"He rich !" cried the fishmonger. "Ha ! ha ! ha !"

When I heard all this, I began to sob,—and as the juge-de-paix rose, I went out and burst into tears. I sat down on the little bench at our door, and my cousins, male and female, passed out as if they did not see me. My cousin Guerlot blew out his

fat cheeks, slipped his thumbs under his braces, and as he eased them, he said—

“Fine warm day, ain’t it? Here, I want you, neighbour Hoquart.”

“What is it?”

“They are going to fish the Zeller ponds to-morrow, shall we go halves?”

And off they went, one after the other: the juge-de-paix and his clerk, the mayor, aunts, cousins and all. And Widow Rochard said:—

“There you are, now, for good! nobody will have anything to do with you!”

I had cried myself quite out of breath, and as I stood there with my face all wet with tears, listening to my relations going away, I heard steps coming down the lane by the side of the orchards through all the heat.

“Ah! good-day, neighbour Balais,” said

Widow Rochard. "You have come to buy our cherries again this year?"

"Yes," said the person spoken to. "I do not make cherries, I sell them; and before selling them, I have to buy them."

"Very true, and it is better to gather them off the trees."

I did not look up, I was too miserable; but I heard the new comer ask, "What that child was crying so for?"

Widow Rochard told her how that my father was dead, that we had nothing in the world, and so my relations would have nothing to do with me, and that I should be left on the parish. Then I felt a hand passed softly over my hair, and a feeling voice said—

"Come, look up, let me see your face."

I raised my head, and I saw a tall thin



woman standing by me. She was past middle age, but her teeth still shone white in her large mouth ; she wore large gold hoop earrings, and she had a yellow silk handkerchief round her head, and a basket of cherries on her arm. She kept looking at me, still passing her long hand through my hair, and then said—

“What ! they won’t have this boy ? why he is a fine handsome fellow—they won’t have him ?”

“No they won’t,” said Widow Rochard.

“They must be out of their senses.”

“No, they are not, but they won’t take the expense.”

“The expense, indeed ! such a boy as this ! You have got nothing the matter with you, have you ? You are neither hump-backed nor lame, are you ?” said she, turning me round and round. “Why,

he has got nothing in the world the matter with him!" she cried, as if surprised; "nothing at all! You have no need to cry, simpleton. Oh, the wretches! they would not take such a boy as this!"

Just then our mayor, who had accompanied the juge-de-paix as far as the end of the village, passed by, saying—

"Good day, Madame Balais."

She turned round, and asked—

"Is it really true that they won't take this boy?"

"Ah, yes, it is true enough," replied the mayor, "he is left on the parish."

"Well, then, I take him."

"You take him!" said the mayor, opening his eyes.

"Yes, I adopt him—that is to say, if the parish has no objection."

My life seemed to return to me when I

heard these words ; and I thanked God in a way, while Madame Balais wiped my face.

“Have you had anything to eat?” she asked.

Widow Rochard replied that we had had our potato soup in the morning. Then she took a piece of white bread out of her pocket, and said—

“Eat that, with some cherries out of my basket, and let us go.”

“Stop till I give him his bundle,” cried Widow Rochard, as she ran to tie up my shoes and my Sunday clothes in a handkerchief. “There they are,” said she, as she gave it to me : “that is all I have belonging to you.”

And then we set out.

“Ah, they would not take you ! What fools there are in the world. It is enough

to put one in a fever, upon my honour.  
What is your name, my boy?"

"Jean-Pierre Clavel, ma'am."

"Well, then, Jean-Pierre, I take you,  
and glad to have you. Give me your  
hand."

She was very tall, and I had to reach  
up to take hold of her.

When we came to the end of the village,  
we found Elias the coal-dealer's little cart,  
standing in the shade, close to the little  
inn, the "Pomme-de-Pin;" and in the cart  
were three great baskets, full of cherries.  
Elias, with his broad-brimmed hat on, was  
leaning over the stair outside, and he  
called out—

"Are we going to start, Madame Balais?"

"Yes, in a minute. Stop just while I  
get a glass of wine, and put the child up  
in the cart."

“Why, it is Nicholas Clavel’s little boy!”

“It is. He is mine now.”

The host Bastien, his two daughters, and a hussar, were all looking out of the window of the little inn. Madame Balais went up the stairs, and told them that she had found me crying, like a poor dog cast out by a bad master, and that she had taken me.

“Just look at him,” she said, “look at his curly brown hair; if he had been made on purpose I would have had him just as he is. Come, Elias, put in the horse, and let the child sit by the cherries.”

The hussar, the girls, and Father Bastien, called out—

“Well done, Madame Balais, well done; that will bring you luck.”

She made no reply, but went in to drink

her measure of wine ; and when she came out, we started down the hill—I riding in a cart for the first time in my life, Elias in front leading his old goat by a strap, and Madame Balais walking behind, saying every minute—

“Eat the cherries—don’t be afraid ; but take care not to swallow the stones.”

It is easy to fancy my joy and my gratitude at being saved ; I was astonished at it all, and from the height of my cart, as it went slowly down the road with its holly hedge, I looked at Saverne in the bottom of the valley ; the old church with its square tower, the broad street, the old painted gables, with numberless garret windows, each with a roof to itself in the shape of an extinguisher, the square, the fountain, all lay in the glaring sunshine. I had seen it all a hundred times, from

Roche-Creuse ; then I thought only of the cows or the goats I was keeping, but now, I said to myself : "You are going henceforth to live in the town, Jean-Pierre ! in the shade of streets."

When we came to the fine fountain which is by the road-side, all surrounded by alders and weeping willows, the goat stopped to breathe for a minute, and Madame Balais leant down to the spout and took a long draught of the water. It was very hot, and one would have liked to stay there till the evening, but we continued our way slowly under the shade of the poplars, till we came to Saverne, and when I saw the first pretty house, with its blue slate roof, its little balcony and bright green shutters all round, I thought a prince lived there for certain.

We got into the town about three

o'clock ; we went up the high street, and, about the middle of it, beyond the market-place, we took another street to the right, the Deux Clefs, into which the sun made its way, between the chimneys, along the mouldering balconies and the crumbling walls.

“ Here we are, Jean-Pierre.”

I opened my eyes wide, for all was new to me. The cart soon stopped before a narrow old house ; the lower window was wider than it was high, it was formed of little round panes of glass, and great skeins of hemp were hanging inside.

It was a weaver's ; a woman of about five and thirty, whose brown hair fell in curls round her face, whose eyes were blue, and nose slightly turned up, was looking at us from the end of the little dark entry.



“Ah, it is you, Madame Balais,” she cried.

“Yes, Madame Dubourg,” replied Madame Balais, “and I have brought somebody with me—my little Jean-Pierre. You do not know him. Look at the poor darling.”

She took me in her arms and kissed me as she set me down. Then we all went into a little dusky room ; the old loom, the cast-iron stove, the table, the old spring-chair, the clock in its walnut-case, so filled it up, that one could scarcely turn round. There were baskets full of bobbins in every corner, and hanks of hemp hanging from every beam in the ceiling. But nevertheless it was beautiful in comparison to our poor hut at Saint Jean-des-Choux ; and to me, who had never seen anything but our four naked walls, and the wood-house behind them, and that for the most part

empty, these hanks of hemp and those great rolls of cloth seemed splendid.

Madame Balais told how she had found me. The other lady said nothing, but kept looking at me ; and I stood stuck up against the wall, without daring to raise my eyes. As soon as Madame Balais went out to help unload the cherries, this lady called out—

“Dubourg, do come here !” And through a door-way that was hidden with skeins of hemp, came a pale, thin old man, with a benevolent look, and with him a pretty little girl with rosy cheeks, and bright eyes, who was busy eating a slice of bread with cream cheese spread on it. “Come here and see what Madame Balais has brought with her from Saint Jean-des-Choux,” said the lady ; “his relations, the Hoquarts and the Guerlots, would not

have him, and she has taken him on her own account."

"That Madame Balais is a good woman," replied the man in a feeling voice.

"Yes! but to saddle one's-self with such an expense.

"Well, if she likes," said the man; "she is alone in the world, and the child will attach himself to her."

"But he has got nothing at all!" exclaimed the woman, who by this time had my little bundle open on her lap, and was examining my poor Sunday jacket, my shirt and my shoes; "he has nothing in the world! And where is he to sleep, I wonder?"

"Dear me, do not trouble yourself so much about it, Madame Madeleine," cried Madame Balais, as she entered and placed her last basket of cherries on the edge of the

loom. "There is my uncle, you know, the canon, in Spain, the one who is ninety years and a half old, he cannot live much longer ; I shall get what he leaves behind him, and that will help me to bring up the little fellow."

She laughed as she said this, and Madame Dubourg grew quite red in the face.

"Oh !" said she, "your uncle in Spain, indeed !"

"Well why should not I have an uncle ?" replied Madame Balais. "You have got an aunt, have you not—an aunt at Saint Witt's?—and when the two children are grown up, they shall be married on the inheritance of the uncle and the aunt—shall they not, Monsieur Antoine ?"

The little man smiled as he answered—

"Just so ; you are about as sure of your uncle's fortune as we are of our Aunt

Jacqueline's ; but you did a good deed in taking the boy—a very good one."

"And I do not repent it," said Madame Balais. "I shall manage well enough with him. I have an old uniform of my poor husband's up-stairs, we will make him a coat out of that, and we will put his bed in the little fruit closet next to my room ; and as to a mattress and quilt, that is easy to get, and the little fellow will sleep comfortably enough. Come, give one another a kiss," continued she, leading the little girl up to me.

The child looked at me with her beautiful blue eyes without speaking, and then gave me a hearty kiss.

Everybody laughed, and I began to feel more at home. Madame Rivel, the wife of the glazier, who lived on the second floor, was just going along the passage, and they

called her in. She was a little, tiny woman, with a quilted cotton cap on her head, a handkerchief crossed over her bosom, and a gold cross hanging round her neck.

Madame Balais immediately began to tell her my history, and two or three of the neighbours came and leaned in at the open window to hear it. To be sure how they did abuse the Hoquarts and the Guerlots ; they called them all sorts of names, and prophesied they would come to want themselves some day.

Madame Madeleine had grown more reconciled by this time, and she said—

“ Well, as it is settled, all I hope is, that he will not make much noise in the house. But I know what boys are.”

“ Pooh ! pooh ! ” said Father Antoine ; “ when the loom is going we cannot hear anything else ; children must amuse them-

selves, and Annette will not be sorry to have him for a play-fellow sometimes.”

At length Madame Balais took up her basket, and placing it on her said,—“ Come along, Jean-Pierre ; as we have not got the legacy yet, we will go and make the soup, and then we will see about your bed.”

When we got out into the passage I took hold of her hand, happy enough.

## CHAPTER II.

WE had to go up three flight of stairs ; the first floor was the Dubourgs', the second, the Rivels', and the third, at the top, was ours. The little windows in the old dingy staircase looked out on the court, an old gallery ran all round the yard ; the Dubourgs dried their linen there ; and there, in the autumn nights, the cats fought and yelled to such a degree that you could not shut your eyes till morning.

At the very top of the house was the



dove-cote, with its conical roof; the openings were thickly set with old rusty nails, intended to keep out the pole-cats; but the tiles were all tumbling off, and the pigeons had deserted the cote long ago. I noticed this as we climbed up to our lodging. Madame Balais held me by the hand all the way, and when we came to the top, she opened a door, which was only fastened by a wooden latch, and we entered a large white-washed room. There were two garret windows that looked into the street. A small stove, with its zig-zag iron pipe, stood in the middle, and at the end a large oak table, on which Madame Balais used to chop up the parsley and onions, and to prepare the other vegetables for cooking. On two shelves, above the table, stood the plates, the lamp, tureen, and two or three bottles and glasses; in

one of the drawers, the pewter spoons and forks were kept, and, in the other, the candles, matches, and tinder-box ; and under the table, stood a large pitcher of water.

A large bed, with its yellow curtains, stood in a recess, at its foot was a chest covered with worsted work ; and these, with three chairs, completed our possessions. Against the gable wall there hung the portrait of Monsieur Balais, formerly captain in the 37th regiment of the line. He was taken in his three-cornered hat,—his cheeks were bronzed, his moustachios light, and his grey eyes seemed to stare at you as you came in. He was a splendid looking fellow, and Madame Balais would sometimes say,—“Ah ! that is my poor husband ; he died on the field of glory, in the rear-guard, at the retreat from Vittoria,

the 21st of June, 1813 ;" and then she would go about her work in silence, and not speak again for hours.

On the left-hand side of this large room was the fruit loft ; the openings let in the air in summer, but towards the end of November, when the snow began to fall, they were stuffed well up with straw. The fruits were carefully arranged on three rows of shelves made of laths, and gave out a pleasant smell.

On the right was a closet with a little window in the roof. I slept in that closet ten years ; it was not more than eight feet wide by ten or twelve long ; but it was nice and warm, for the front chimney of the house went through the wall, and the water in the pitcher never froze, even in the depth of winter.

How often when I thought of it in after

times, have I said to myself, — “Jean-Pierre, you will never have such another room.”

I relate all these things, as they appeared to me at first, in order that you may form an idea of my surprise at having such a fine lodging.

Madame Balais carried the baskets of cherries into the fruit loft, and came out smiling, with a fine head of cabbage, some leeks, and some large potatoes in her hands. She laid them on the table, and took out of the drawer some bread, the pepper and salt, and a piece of bacon. I saw in a minute what she was going to do, and took up the chopper in readiness to split some wood to light the fire. She smiled and said—

“You are a good boy, Jean-Pierre ; you and I shall be very happy together.”

She struck a light, and I made the fire

while she was getting the vegetables and potatoes ready for the soup.

“Aye, aye!” she said, “your relations are a set of wretches; but I am sure your father and mother must have been good people.”

I could not help bursting out into tears once more when she spoke like this, so she said no more, and as soon as the pot was on, and the vegetables in it, she opened the door of my room, and took a mattress off her own bed for me to sleep on; she also took a wadded and quilted coverlet and a pair of clean sheets out of the big chest, and arranged my bed very nicely, saying, — “You will be very comfortable, my dear,” and I looked on with delight. It was half-past seven by this time, and she cut some slices of bread into the large soup-plates with the blue and

red flowers on them, which I have still before my eyes, and then said,—

“Come, Jean-Pierre, sit down to supper, and tell me whether our soup is good.”

“Oh, that it is,” said I, “I know by the smell of it, Madame Balais.”

“Do not call me Madame,” she said, “call me mother, I would rather you would. And now blow your soup, my boy, and begin.”

I had never before eaten such good soup. Madame Balais gave me two more ladles-full, and when she saw how I enjoyed it, she began to laugh and said—“I should get as fat as a Canon of Estramadura.”

After the soup, I had a good piece of bread and a slice of bacon, so that I thanked God in my heart, for having kept me out of the hands of the Hoquarts and the Guerlots; for they would have let me

keep cows and live on boiled potatoes to the end of my days. I told Madame Balais so, and she laughed heartily, and said, it was true enough.

It was dark by the time supper was over, and when the candle was lighted, Madame Balais cleared the table, and then began to take the things out of the great chest; she laid on the bed the linen and clothes that had belonged to her late husband; saying, as she did so—"This will do, we shall see about that."

I sat by the little stove with my arms clasped round my knees. I was looking on with my heart full of gratitude, and thinking that the very spirit of my father was in her. After a while, she said—

"Why Jean-Pierre, you do not speak a word, what are you thinking about?"

"I was thinking that I am very happy."

“Well then,” she said, “that makes two happy folks, you and I. We want nothing of the Guerlots nor the Dubourgs, nor anybody else. We have Balais to help us. See, Jean-Pierre, how he is looking at us.”

I turned round and thought he really was looking, so I was quite frightened, and began to say my prayers to myself.

At last, about ten o'clock, the examination was over, and Madame Balais said she thought I must be sleepy.

“Yes, I am, mother.”

“Well, so am I,” she said ; so we passed into my little room, and she put the candle on the floor, and waited while I got into bed.

Then she put a pillow under my head, and pulled the great flowered coverlet up to my chin, and wished me good night.



I wanted to think over my great happiness, but I was so very drowsy and so very comfortable that I fell asleep directly.

## CHAPTER III.

I NEVER slept better than I did that night. What happiness to feel we have found a resting-place ! The consciousness of it comes over us even in our sleep, and we sleep the better for it.

Just as the grey dawn peeped in at the window, I awoke. The noise of the loom was already to be heard in the old house, and Father Antoine's shuttle was busy flying across the threads. I was to hear the tic-tac of that old loom for ten years ; it still hangs in my ear, is still treasured in my heart.

While I was listening Madame Balais was getting up ; I heard her strike a light and make the fire in the little stove ; then she opened the window, put on her sabots, and went for the milk from Madame Stark's at the corner. I heard her go down, and wondered what it was for. A cock outside was crowing just like the cocks at Saint Jean-des-Choux ; carts were passing in the street, the town was waking up.

I soon heard the sabots come upstairs, Madame Balais began to prepare the coffee, and put the milk on the stove to heat. Then my door opened gently, and the good woman not hearing me move, looked in ; there I was with my eyes wide open, like a hare in her form.

"Ah, ah !" said she, "do you know it is very late ? Oh, these men folk, they are

all alike, they think of nothing but taking their ease, it is in their nature."

"Come, Jean-Pierre, jump up."

I was soon out of bed, and beginning to dress myself; she took me on her knees, and helped me on with my shoes, and then passing her large hand through my hair, she said, smiling—

"Be a good boy, and you will grow up a fine handsome lad, a very handsome one, but you must not be vain. Now go and have a good wash under the pump in the yard, wash your face and neck, and hands. Cleanliness is the best recommendation to any man. Do not be afraid of spoiling the water; it is made on purpose."

"Yes, mother," I answered.

And as I went down the steep old staircase, I could see her with her yellow handkerchief round her head, and silver earrings in her ears, leaning over the banisters.

“Take care you do not fall, take care,” she cried. She watched me till I got to the bottom, and then went back into the room.

I saw the door that led to the court at the end of the passage, and on the right was the little kitchen belonging to the Dubourgs ; the door was open, and the fire on the hearth was reflected on the bright saucepans and the dishes on the shelves. Madame Madeleine was there, and I took care to wish her good morning. Then I ran to the pump, and had a good wash. It was already very hot, and the sun darted down into the court-yard as into a well. A great tabby cat, with his paws tucked under him, was pretending to be asleep on the balustrade of the gallery, while the sparrows were chirping and fighting in the gutters.

I was looking about me while I was drying my face, and little Annette came into the passage and cried out,—

“There you are, Jean-Pierre?”

“Yes,” I answered, “here I am.” We were both delighted, and began laughing, but Madame Madeleine called out from the kitchen—

“Do not be silly, Annette, let Jean-Pierre alone.”

So I made haste up stairs, and Madame Balais was quite pleased to see me looking clean and fresh.

“That is how a boy ought to be,” she said; “now let us have our coffee, and then be off to the market-house.”

The cups were all ready on the table, and I had *café-au-lait* for the first time in my life, and very good I found it was, better even than the soup.

When we had finished breakfast, the rooms had to be swept, and the cups and saucers to be washed and put in their places, and, by the time all was in order, it was seven o'clock. Then we went down. Madame Balais carried one of the baskets full of cherries, and I had the weights and scales in another basket. We went out in that style, and a beautiful day it was.

As we went up the high street, the hosier, the grocer, and other tradesmen who had just opened their shops, and were standing at their doors in their shirt-sleeves, did not forget to look at us. The report had been spread that Madame Balais had taken to a child from Saint Jean-des-Choux, and there were many that would not believe it. Two or three of her acquaintances in the market came and asked her if it was true.

“Oh yes, true enough,” she said. “It is rare at my age to have a child who can eat soup as soon as he is born, and I am very proud of my boy.” And then the folks laughed.

We were soon at the *place* where formerly stood the palace of the bishops of Saverne. There was our stall with five or six others, where they sold smoked meat, hosiery and earthenware, under the acacias ; so that we enjoyed the sight of the sunshine sitting in the shade, with our baskets of cherries before us. The maid-servants and also the soldiers came to buy them, at three sous a pound, and the children came for farthings'-worths.

Two or three times in the day, Madame Balais told me to go out on the *place*, and to make acquaintance with some of the boys. I went out at last, and they all




came round me directly, asking where I was from.

I answered as best I could, but a great red-haired fellow, son of Materne, the blacksmith, began to pull me about, and set the rest laughing at me, and I fell upon him and knocked him down with a blow.

"That is right, Jean-Pierre," Madame Balais called out, "give him what he deserves."

The rest that were looking on saw by this that I was strong, and all the boys in the town soon knew all about it, and they said to one another: "That boy of Madame Balais' is a strong chap, he has been used to keeping cows and goats at Saint Jean-des-Choux, that is how it is."

They were all afraid of me, and though Materne and his brother Jerome both had a spite against me, they did not dare to say anything.



Madame Balais seemed delighted at it. "It is all right," she said, "we should never provoke others, but we must not allow ourselves to be insulted either, a fellow who does so has no spirit."

By five o'clock we had sold all our cherries, and then we came home, cooked our supper, and went to bed. Things went on so day after day, through rain and shine ; when the cherries were over, Madame Balais sold pears, dried plums, &c. She would not let me stay all day in the stall ; every now and then she would say, "Go and play ; boys at your age must not sit still, like monks over their beads, they should run here and run there, and take plenty of exercise ; that is the way to grow and get strong. Off to play with you !"

Naturally I did not want to be told twice, and in less than a fortnight I knew

the Maternes, the Goudiers, the Paulets, the Robichons, and all the boys in the neighbourhood. We had plenty of time, goodness knows, between seven in the morning and six at night, to run the town, to look at the turners and blacksmiths, and the modellers and tin-men and cabinet-makers at their work, and to roll in the barns and hay-lofts, and mouch in the hedges besides. There was plenty of fighting, of course. Every night when I came home, I used to hear Madame Madeleine's voice calling out from the end of the passage ;—

“Ah ! Jean-Pierre makes good use of his time ! Look at his elbows, look at his knees, look at his nose and his ears, he is getting on !”

I never answered a word, and made haste to get up stairs ; but, if by chance Madame Balais was within hearing, she always got

angry. "Madame Dubourg," she would say, "I would rather see him in rags like that, than see him a coward. There are plenty of dogs that run away when they are struck, it is the nature of spaniels and turn-spits, but I like those that show their teeth when they are attacked. Everyone to their taste you know, I cannot bear cowards myself, and besides Madame Madeleine, everybody ought to mind their own business."

Then we would go upstairs, hand in hand, quite satisfied with ourselves.

The door of the Revels' little room used always to be open in hot weather; there he used to be with his large round brass spectacles on his nose, busy with his sheets of glass that grated on the table when they were touched, and there sat his little wife sewing from morning till night. They

never spoke to us, and when we wished them good-night as we passed, they only nodded their heads.

These quiet folks never had disputes with anybody; they were, as one may say, like the two pots of mignonette that stood on their window-sill, on the shady side of the court; you never heard one word higher than another, except when the wife called their cat on the stairs, for they would not go to sleep without it in their room.

Matters went on then well, since madame was pleased, for about six weeks. But one evening, when I had fought the two Maternes at once, behind the wall of the Jews' cemetery, they had given me such a rolling in the nettles that I came in with my face and hands, and even my legs under my trousers, as red as boiled lobsters.

Madame Balais, looking at me sorrowfully while we were at supper, said,—

“Ah! we have not gained the victory to-day, Jean-Pierre; the enemy have taken the cannon, and it was as much as we could do to save the colours.”

I was mortified at that, and cried out that they were two at once.

“Just so,” she said, “that is just like the *Kaiserliks*, they are always two or three to one; but I am delighted to see that you bear it all without complaining. It cannot be helped, we must all take our chances in war, sometimes winning and sometimes losing, sometimes advancing, at others retreating. But you, my boy, do not complain; just like Balais, he never complained of the blows; even the very day of his death he looked at me, as much as to say, ‘It will not be anything, I shall get over

it.' Oh! what a man he was! he might have come to be a prince or a king as well as another, it was not for want of courage, nor of good service either; but he could not write well, and he did not know the first four rules of arithmetic. If it had not been for that there is no saying what we might have been; I might have been the Duchess of Balais or something else, perhaps; but you see he did not know his four rules, so what could be done? But I will not have the same thing happen to you—you must have learning; I should like to see you an officer of the staff—do you hear what I say?"

"Yes, Madame Balais."

"Well, then, we must begin at once. I will take you to Monsieur Vasserau tomorrow, and you shall learn all that is taught in the school, and then you shall

choose the trade you like best. There are plenty of ways of getting one's bread ; some dance on the tight-rope, you and I sell cherries ; some go about tinkering, others go into the army. Oh, yes, people get their living in fifty different ways, but the easiest is to be seated in a well-stuffed arm-chair, dressed in a black coat and a white cravat and frill, and to return the bows of the people that are taking their hats off down to the ground before you, and addressing you as an Ambassador, or a Prefect, or a Minister. That is all very nice, but then one must know the four rules, and write a fine hand. We will go then to Monsieur Vassereau's, Jean-Pierre ; that is settled," she continued, as she rose from table, "we will go early to-morrow morning, and if it costs thirty sous a month I do not mind."



We made haste to bed as soon as she had done speaking, but I lay awake till midnight, thinking about the school and Monsieur Vassereau, and of all Madame Balais had said to me.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning Madame Balais got up early, and when I came into the room, I saw she had dressed herself with the greatest pains. She had on a beautiful dress all over flowers, and a handsome cap ; and she had arranged her grey hair in two large curls.

“ Sit down, Jean-Pierre,” she said, “ and eat your breakfast, we must start in half an hour. She made me put on a clean shirt, my new shoes, and my velvet jacket ; then she opened her great coffer, and took

out a beautiful shawl, which she put on before our little glass, and when it was on the fringe nearly touched the ground. When she was quite ready she called me to come along.

I had never seen school at Saint Jean-des-Choux, and I dreaded it a little, but as Madame Balais went first, I was obliged to follow her down stairs.

As we reached the little dusky passage at the bottom, Madame Dubourg looked out of the kitchen and she appeared very much surprised.

As soon as we got into the street, Madame Balais told me to be sure to take off my cap when I went into the school, and we made our way by the little street of the Trois Quilles and behind the garden of the Juge-de-paix. We soon found ourselves in front of an old corner house,

and I could hear many voices calling out altogether—

“B-a, Ba ; B-e, Be ; B-i, Bi,” and so on. The glass in the old windows vibrated with the noise, and above the tones of the children a loud voice called out—

“Look out ! Materne, I am coming to you.”

It was M. Vassereau giving Materne warning, and the mere sound of his voice sent a chill down my back-bone. We had reached the school, however, and Madame Balais told me to come in with her. She went down a passage on the left, and I followed.

At the end of the passage, there was a door with a small pane of glass in it, and when we came there we could hear the “B-a, Ba,” plainer than ever. Madame Balais opened the door, there was silence in-

stantly, and I saw the great school-room, with its rows of old ink-stained tables, and the benches on which a number of children, some with sabots, some with shoes, and some bare-foot, had sat for years. I saw the copies hung between the windows, the stove on the right, the large black-board against the wall on the same side, and on the other, M. Vassereau's pulpit; he was seated with his black silk cap on his head, and was in the act of setting a copy; and his cat-o'-nine-tails lay on the desk before him.

The place was full of children between the ages of six and twelve; the big ones were sitting at the tables, and the little ones on three rows of forms in front of the desk. Two or three were standing up holding out their pens for M. Vassereau to mend, they kept drawling out "For large

hand, please, sir ;” “ For round hand please, sir :” but he went on writing, and took no notice of them.

I saw all this at a glance. Every child in the school had turned round as we entered, and all the faces, fat or thin, brown or fair, were peeping at us, as they leant over their books. As the children on the forms had stopped suddenly, M. Vassereau looked up ; when he perceived Madame Balais and me at the door, he rose, and pulled his silk cap a little forward on his head, by way of making a bow. You might have heard a pin drop then : M. Vassereau came forward to meet us, and they began to talk about me.

Madame Balais being tall and so handsomely dressed, made M. Vassereau look very small and plain, he had on a brown coat

and black waistcoat, and still kept to the old knee-breeches, and wore large silver buckles in his shoes. He had a determined looking countenance, somewhat pale, a square chin, straight well-formed nose, brown eyes, and he had a wrinkle in his forehead, between the eyebrows ; and, as he stood there with his cat on his arm, he did not look particularly indulgent, and I thought to myself, if I am to learn my four rules of him, I must mind what I am about.

We were all standing then, in the middle of the school-room ; and all the scholars were listening. Monsieur Vassereau appeared most respectful to Madame Balais, who held her head up proudly, as she said, "I have brought this boy to you, Monsieur Vassereau, he belongs to Saint Jean-des-Choux, but I have adopted him

because he was abandoned by his bad relations. I mean to bring him up well, I wish you to take good care of him, and to teach him all that is necessary, and I am sure he will profit by your instructions."

"If he does not," replied M. Vassereau, glancing at me, "it will be his own fault, I shall do my part;" and then looking me full in the face, he asked me my name.

"Jean Pierre, sir."

"And your father's?"

"My father's name was Nicholas Clavel."

"Well then, Clavel, let us see what you know. Can you tell your letters?"

"No, sir."

"Then sit down there, on the form. Lend him your A B C, Gossard, you can learn together?"



While M. Vassereau was speaking, five or six big boys kept laughing instead of minding their lessons, and I soon saw something that helped to strengthen my good resolutions considerably.

M. Vassereau had turned his head at the sound of the laughing, and caught the red-headed Materne making signs to Gourdier. Without speaking a word he went and pulled his ear till it stretched again. He did not look angry, but young Materne opened his mouth, till you could see down his throat, his eyes stared as if they were coming out of his head, and he drew his breath so hard that it could be heard all through the school-room, where everyone was hard at work by this time.

"Well Madame Balais," said M. Vassereau, coming quietly back to us, "you

may reckon on me, and this is a boy that will do me credit, I will answer for it."

"Clavel, go and sit where I told you."

As I took my place at the end of the little form—

"Oh, yes, I will learn," I said to myself; "I must."

"Well then, M. Vassereau, you will take him, I will see to the rest."

They went out into the little passage, and while they stayed there, all the boys began looking about, laughing, calling to each other, and throwing balls of paper; but no sooner was M. Vassereau's slow step heard, than each one leant down over his lesson. He looked right and left as he entered, and re-seating himself at his desk, saying—

"Now begin the A B C, and you look over Gossard, Clavel."

They began, and I followed with the greatest attention, without even daring to look up at the boy that was pointing to the letters.

Monsieur Vassereau was busy mending pens, every now and then he made the round of the school-room with his cat under his arm, and looked at the big boys' writing. When it was bad, he called them asses, and corrected the faults himself; and half-an-hour before the end of school-time, he sat down at his desk once more, and cried out to the little ones—

“Stop.” And then came lessons.

“What is grammar?”

“What, is an article?”

“What is a verb?”

And when all that was over, he called up a few of the little ones, and asked them their letters.

At half-past ten in the morning, and at four in the afternoon, the boy at the top of the first class recited prayers, and as soon as the "Amen" was out of his mouth, the children snatched up their bags and their books and set off to their homes, screaming and hallooing to their heart's content.

Monsieur Vassereau had often forbidden them to make such a noise, but once out of school they were not afraid of him—children will be children. I was so delighted to get out when it came to prayers, and the "Good morning, Monsieur Vassereau," the first day, that I ran all the way home, and up our three pair of stairs without stopping, crying out, all the way, "School is out. School is out."

Father Antoine Dubourg could not help laughing, and even old Revel said to his wife, as he looked at me over his

spectacles—"Ah, Catherine, that is the happiest time of our lives. When school is over our day's work is done. That good time never comes back."

CHAPTER V.

I SOON knew what going to school was. I learned to drawl out B A, Ba, like the rest, to watch every movement of Monsieur Vassereau, and to look at the flies while I was pretending to follow the class, in Gossard's book.

As soon as school was out I used to go to the stall, to Madame Balais.

"Well Jean Pierre," she used to say, "are you getting on."

And I would answer, "Oh, yes, but it is hard work all the same."

“ Ah! my boy, it is all hard work in this world ; if we could pick up potatoes and pears in the streets, we should never plant trees, and if bread grew in our pockets, we should neither plough nor sow ; we should want neither rain nor sunshine ; we should neither reap nor gather into sheaves, we should not thresh nor winnow, nor carry corn to the mill, nor grind it, we should not take the flour to the baker to be kneaded and baked. That would all be very pleasant, but it cannot be ; no, people must be content to labour for their wants. Everything that grows without labour is good for nothing, like the thistles and nettles and briars, but the more labour we bestow, the better is the produce of the earth. Look at the vines that grow high upon the hill-side, in stony grounds ; all the manure has to be carried up on our backs

in baskets, and it is very hard work, but then, the wine is very good, Jean-Pierre. If you knew how hard they work in the vineyards in Spain and the South of France, and on the banks of the Rhine, in the heat of the sun, you would think yourself well off to be sitting here in the shade, and to be learning something every day that will be useful to you. I am now having you ploughed and sowed by Monsieur Vassereau, but who is it that will reap the harvest? who will gain his bread by it? It is you. I do what I am doing because it gives me pleasure, but you must take care to profit by it. I may not live long. So get on my boy, get on."

It always made me sad when she said this, and I worked harder than ever. I tried to learn as fast as I could, so as to please her.



I must add that Monsieur Vassereau was well satisfied with me, for, at the end of a week I knew my letters ; and he said in the school, "See Clavel, a boy from Saint Jean-des-Choux, he has learned all his letters in a week, and that ass of a Materne and that scamp of a Gourdier, have learned nothing in three years, except to take birds'-nests, and to steal carrots out of other people's gardens, when school is out."

He grew wroth as he spoke, and ended by giving them a thrashing, so that the school echoed to their cries. Monsieur Vassereau often said to them, "If you come to be hanged some day nobody can blame me, for God knows, I take trouble enough about you, I thrash the Gourdiers and the Maternes more than all the rest put together, and it is all no use, they get


worse and worse, and people come to me every day to complain of them, as if it was my fault."

In due time Monsieur Vassereau put me among the big ones, in the third class, and told me to ask Madame Balais for a slate to learn to write large hand. It made her quite happy to find I was getting on. "I am quite pleased with you, Jean-Pierre," she said, "you will do me credit."

All the people in our house, including Madame Madeleine, had got accustomed to me, and little Annette used to run and meet me when I came home from school, crying out,—“There is Jean-Pierre!”

I ought to have been very happy, but I did not like being shut up; I could not get used to sitting for a couple of hours at a time without stirring. How often in school time on the fine days, when the

bright sun came in at the open windows, and the little flies pursued their joyous round in its ray, have I forgotten slate, copies, flourishes, and even school-room, school-fellows and all, as I sat staring at the sun-light, with wide-open eyes like a cat in a dream, and thinking of the hill of Saint Jean-des-Choux with its purple heather and its golden furze, all alive with the hum of the bee; of the goats that climbed high on the rocks, stretching out their long necks to reach the blossoms of the honeysuckles that shot up their branches against the pale blue sky; of the oxen lying in the shadow of an old beech, with half-shut eyes, and gently lowing from time to time as if to complain of the great heat. At other times the sound of our whips seemed to echo through Saint-Witt, and the smoke of our fire in the brambles made



its way towards the clouds, while our potatoes were cooking in the white ashes. There were the great pine woods sloping down to the valley, there the murmur of the falling water, the song of the thrush, the sound of the woodman's axe through the silence. How often! how often! I pictured to myself all these things, till roused by a voice, "What are you looking at, Clavel?" I shivered all over, and resumed my writing.

Monsieur Vassereau very rarely struck me. He made a great difference in the way he treated his pupils, and never got really angry except with those that were incorrigible. I believe he guessed my thoughts, and that he dreamt of his own village too, sometimes, on the lovely summer days.

Those who have been bred up the

country, who, as children, and for years together, have lived in the woods like wild birds, must have time to get used to the cage. Ah, yes, a long time, the memory of the green fields, the sweet smell of the forests and the meadows, and the sound of the running waters comes to them over the walls.

If it had not been for the Thursdays\* I think I should have broken my heart; for, for all Madame Balais' good soup, I grew thinner and thinner. Happily there were Thursdays. "To-morrow," we used to say, "to-morrow we will go to Haut Baar, to Géroldseck, to the Roche-Plate, we will go nutting in the valley of Fiquet, we will run about under the firs, we will climb where we like, and scream as loud as we like, and do whatever we like."

\* Thursday is a holiday in *all* French Schools.

Oh ! those Thursdays ! if God had only made two in the week ! On Sundays we had to go to mass and to vespers ; half the day was lost, but on Thursdays we started early in the morning. Madame Balais would say to me, over night,—

“ You want exercise, Jean-Pierre, I cannot bear to see you getting so thin. Going to school is a good thing, a very good thing, but it would never do to be stooping and sitting over the books for ever ; boys want the open air. Off with you, go to bathe, but take care not to go where it is dangerous till you can swim ; you must keep near the shore, none but fools go and get drowned ; so take care, enjoy yourself, run and climb as much as you like, good health is of more consequence than even the four rules.”

There was no need for her to tell me to

enjoy myself, for I thought of nothing else for a couple of days before-hand. There were three of us, little Jean Paul Latouche, the clerk's son, and Emmanuel Dolomieu, son of the juge-de-paix. Annette wanted to go with us, she would cry and kiss me to take her, but Madame Madeleine would not hear of it, and we could hear her crying after us when we were half-way down the street.

Emmanuel and Jean-Paul always had something to eat in their pockets; I never had anything but a crust of bread, but I found more nuts and more everything else than they did, and we shared all between us.

The first thing we always did was to go and bathe. Ah! the river Lorne and I are old acquaintances, and I could show you the very place in its sandy bed, behind the

Roche-plate, under the beeches and aspens. Oh, what delight it was to reach the edge of that rock,\* and look over the valley and the pine forests—on the broad meadows and the clear river sparkling through the trees, to race down the little pathway through the hot sand, under the hanging shrubs, startling the lizards that swarmed among the tall, scorched heather!

What delight to get into the mowing grass at the bottom, and having well looked if there was any keeper to be seen, to dash boldly into it, keeping close one behind the other, so as to leave as narrow a track as possible!

What joy to reach the river, to dip in our hands and call out softly “it is quite warm,” to undress as quickly as possible, laughing and hiding, while the river gurgles and

\* “Roche-plate” means a plateau or flat rock.



foams over the stones, then to dash in, one—two—three, and to swim down the current like frogs under the waving shadows, while the gay gad-flies dart hither and thither under the leafy canopy! Oh, the merry days!

Then how we clapped each other on the back to kill the great brown flies that were settling there to sting! How we dashed the water over each other! and then, how we listened for fear of the forester, how we watched! And when at last our teeth began to chatter and our blood to chill, we would say to each other "Let us go out now," and we would sit down on the burning sand to warm ourselves; shivering, our faces blue with cold. Ah, how hungry we used to feel all at once, and how sweet a crust of bread seemed then! Ah, there are some bright days in our lives!

And once more dressed, how we took our way, all refreshed and merry as we were, through the woods, whistling as we went, and bringing down the clusters of brown nuts with our sticks. Oh ! is there anything like it ? If school had been invented only that boys may enjoy Thursdays, I maintain it would be well worth while.

So the days, and weeks, and months went by ; after the Sundays and Thursdays came the school ; after the summer the autumn ; the season when apples and pears are stored in the fruit-lofts, the time when the trees stand bare, and the dead leaves drive before the wind. Then there were no more nuts nor beech-masts.

The first white frosts came ; the house doors were kept shut. The old loom rattled on, the wind drove the rain through

the planks of our stall, in the *place*. Yes, winter was come with its great snow-flakes, and its heavy rains dripping for weeks together from the eaves; with it came Madame Balais' chaufferette\* and fur slippers. The snow-balls flew in all directions, in the street we halloed and fought; our ears were red and our hands burning. Now a window was broken at M. Rebac's, the lawyer; now at M. Hilarin's, the president. We all ran away; out would come the servant. Nobody had done it!

Then came the long dark winter Thursdays, when we sat in the chimney corner watching the crackling flame or listening to the singing of the pot on the fire; or went down to the Dubourgs', when Madame Madeleine would talk, over her spinning,

\* Box of heated wood ashes, or charcoal, to keep the feet warm.

about her aunt Jacqueline of Saint Witt's fortune, and Madame Balais would tell the story of the sluices in Holland, when Balais had only plaited straw slippers to wear when it was freezing hard enough to split the very stones, or else she would describe the encounters of Torres-Vedras and Badajos.

The wind whistled through the courtyard at night, and whirled away more slates from the dove-cote; then was the time to draw your knees up in bed and to pull the warm *édredon*\* up to your chin, and to listen to the storm. Madame Balais coughs all night, the Revels' cuckoo clock strikes one, and at last I fall asleep.

Yes, this is winter; it is very long in the mountains, and yet, with what pleasure

\* Large square pillows of eider-down placed on the top of the bed clothes.

I recall that chimney corner, and the good folks ; our *sabots*, lined with rabbit skins, and even the great stove in the school-room, where those that came before Monsieur Vassereau, stood round, and got a good warm, while the rain ran in streams down the window-panes ! We ask ourselves in later days if ever we shall be so happy again, if ever we shall feel once more as we felt then.

I made great progress in my lessons. Monsieur Vassereau had selected me and three or four others to learn the responses of the Mass. He put us to kneel in the middle of the school-room, and we responded together, so one helped the other.

"Clavel," he said, "I give you notice that you are to be a chorister, you will chant with George Cloutier, and attend every Sunday."

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He gave me a singing lesson every day at ten o'clock, and that made me very proud. Madame Madeleine began to think something of me, and Madame Balais was delighted with my good conduct. Monsieur Vassereau often said in the school, that I was treading in the steps of his best pupil, Captain Robichon, of the 27th Regiment of the line, and that I had only to continue as I was going on.

## CHAPTER VI.

**I**N three years I was one of the head boys in the school ; I knew the catechism, wrote a good hand, could spell pretty well, and knew my four rules. It was time to make my first communion and to learn a trade. Madame Balais often said :

“ If it was now like it was in my time, when courage and luck went for something, I should advise you to wait till you were eighteen, and then enlist, but I see that now the soldier’s life is not worth a straw ; they are ordered from garrison to garrison,

then sent for a few years to learn to drink absinthe in Africa, and then come back superannuated."

Emmanuel Dolomieu, little Jean-Paul, and many others of my schoolfellows had been for some time learning Latin at the College at Phalsburg preparatory to becoming judges, lawyers, notaries, officers, &c.

Monsieur Vassereau always said I had better abilities than they, and that it was a pity I should not be put forward, but what use are abilities when you are poor? You must work to earn your bread!

A great sadness took hold of me, but I hid it all, not to vex Madame Balais. About the end of spring something happened which I shall never forget. It was about a week before the first communion, and it was well known that I was to be at the head of all the rest; that I was



to recite the "Act of Faith," and make all the responses. M. le Curé Jacob had even called at the house to say so, and all the old women in the town were talking about it.

It was a great honour for us, but also a great expense. We talked about it every day. Madame Madeleine, who interfered in everybody's business, counted up so much for the coat, so much for the waist-coat and trousers, so much for the white cravat, the shoes and the hat; it made a good deal altogether, and Madame Balais said, "Well, we must see what we can do for once. Jean-Pierre is going to be apprenticed, and this will be the last and the greatest day of his boyhood."

Annette, who had grown taller by this time, cried out, "He ought to be the best dressed of all, because he is the best."

I was just beginning to understand a little of the ways of the world, so I said nothing.

That very morning, as they were still talking over this important matter, in the Dubourgs' room, while Madame Balais was out, just as the clock struck eight, somebody pushed the door open, and I saw a tall, carroty woman enter, with a basket on her arm. It was very dark in the little room, and at first I did not recollect her. It was only when she called out in a loud market-woman's kind of voice, "Good morning to the company, I am come to see our boy," that I recognized my cousin, Madame Hoquart; the same who had cast me off at St. Jean-des-Choux three years before, and called my father a beggar.

She looked all round. As for me, I was

staggered, I had not a drop of blood in my veins.

"Well, Jean-Pierre," she cried as soon as she spied me, "it seems you are a good boy. All your relations were so glad to hear the good accounts of you, the Paesels, the Koniams, and the rest, and as for poor dear Guerlot, he shed tears of joy."

"Take a seat, pray, Madame Hoquart," said Madame Madeleine, handing a chair, "take a seat. Yes, it is very true we cannot complain of him, but now there is the first communion. What an expense!"

"Just what we have been thinking about," answered the tall woman; "we said to each other, that good soul, Madame Balais, cannot be expected to do everything, and the boy is our relation, our own flesh and blood. So look here, see what I have brought."

And uncovering her basket, she took out of it a new coat, a pair of shoes, a pair of trousers and a waistcoat.

Madame Madeleine and Annette screamed with delight, "Oh, Madame Hoquart!"

"Well, yes," said she, "we think he will look very nice in these clothes."

And as I still remained looking very dismal on the other side of the table, Madame Madeleine said, "Why do you not come here, Jean-Pierre? come and thank your cousin for her kindness to you."

Then I felt a terrible sensation within me, and without thinking what I was going to say, I replied, "No, I will not."

"You will not?"

"No! I will not have any of it."

Madame Hoquart drew herself up greatly astonished.

"What is the matter with him," she

said, in a wheedling voice, "What is the matter with our boy?"

"Oh!" said Madame Madeleine, "it is pride; his head is turned with his honours."

"Ah!" said the fish-woman, "that is in the family; that sort of pride makes people grow rich."

Then Father Antoine joined in, saying, "How is this, Jean-Pierre? you do not say thank you, to your cousin. You cannot have any gratitude in you."

When he said this, I could not help my sobs; I leant my forehead against the wall and burst into tears.

Every one was at a loss to make it out. Poor Father Antoine got up and came to me, and asked me in a whisper, "What-ever was the matter?"

"Nothing," said I.

"Nothing?"

"No, but I will not have anything from them," I sobbed out.

"Why?"

"They turned me off, and they said my father and mother were beggars."

When Father Antoine heard me say that he turned pale, and when his wife began to scold me again, he spoke to her sharply. "Hold your tongue, Madeleine, hold your tongue," said he, and he began walking about the room in silence.

I was still leaning my head against the wall, and the tears were running fast down my face; Annette was standing just behind me. "Just only look at the clothes, Jean-Pierre," she said, "they are so handsome."

Madame Hoquart burst into a sharp laugh, and began to pack up the things, saying,—

“So you will not have them, my boy. Oh! there is no need to cry about it; there are many will be glad of them. Ah, that is how you thank people for their kindness, is it!”

While she was screaming away in this style, and stuffing the things into her basket, the door opened, and I heard Madame Balais’ voice.

“Why what is all this about? What is Jean-Pierre crying for?”

“What indeed!” replied Madame Madeleine; “only fancy, he says he will not have the new clothes his cousin, Madame Hoquart, has brought all the way from home for his first communion.”

“Oh that is it, is it?” said Madame Balais, drawing up. “Why do you refuse them, Jean-Pierre?”

“Oh! it is because they called his

father and mother beggars at Saint Jean-des-Choux," replied Father Antoine.

"Ah, he has not forgotten that; that is why he will not have the clothes, is it?" cried the good woman; "it is quite right, and shows a feeling heart"—and looking straight at Madame Hoquart—"Take yourself off," she said, "we have done without you till now, and we can do without you still. I, Anne Balais, will give this child his clothes, and you may go to the D—l. You hear what I say."

The tall woman tried to speak, but Madame Balais' voice was so much louder than hers that she could not be heard.

"Away with you, you good-for-nothing, you deserted your own flesh and blood, and you all deserve hanging."

By this time Revel and his wife, and some neighbours who had been attracted



by the noise came in, and the fish-woman snatched up her basket and rushed out, exclaiming,—

“That is what it is to do a kindness—that is your thanks for you !”

Then Madame Balais came and touched my shoulder,—“I shall give you your clothes, Jean-Pierre,” said she.

“Oh !” said I, kissing her, “Oh, if you give me only a blouse I shall be quite contented.”

“No,” said she, in an affectionate tone, “it shall not be a blouse, you shall be the best dressed of all of them. Do not you trouble yourself Madame Madeleine, this boy’s heart is in the right place, and he will make his way in the world.”

Thus spoke this excellent woman, whom I shall always consider as my mother, and a week after I had the new suit for my

first communion ; it was made a little too large for me, so that it might last a good while, and everybody in the house was delighted with it.

In thinking of these things the tears come to my eyes. These were the last of my school days ; another phase of life, with its cares, was about to begin for me—the life of an apprentice, when you must work, not for yourself, but for a master, work continually, and with future anxieties before you.

## CHAPTER VII.

**T**WO or three days after my first communion, while we were at breakfast, Madame Balais asked whether I liked one trade better than another. I replied that I liked a cabinet-maker's the best, because I was so fond of handsome furniture, such as chests of drawers, and presses, and carved picture-frames.

She was well pleased. "I am glad," she said, "that you have made your choice, for when a lad takes the first trade that offers, it shows he has no taste for any ;

and as your mind is made up," she continued, rising, "we might as well see about it at once."

"Put on your coat, Jean-Pierre, I will take you to Monsieur Nivoi's, the master cabinet-maker down by the fountain, you cannot be in better hands. Nivoi knows his trade better than anyone in the town; he is a sensible man, he has travelled through France, and has worked five or six years in Paris. I am sure, that to oblige me, he will receive you at once."

I knew Monsieur Nivoi very well, he always wore a grey cloth waistcoat with deep pockets on each side, in one he carried his rule and measure, in the other a great snuff-box; his countenance was open, I liked the expression of his roguish-looking eyes, and there was nobody I should have preferred for a master, and I dressed myself

quickly, while Madame Balais was putting on her shawl, so we were ready to start in a very few minutes.

We soon reached Monsieur Nivoi's. He kept a little inn adjoining his workshop, which was just opposite the wood-store down by the fountain. The sign of the inn was "The Two Cans;" it was always full of the hussars, whose songs had the advantage of the accompaniment of the saw and the plane.

It was about nine o'clock when we reached the workshop. Monsieur Nivoi was busy chalking some red lines on a board, and looked up from his work quite surprised to see us.

"Why it is Madame Balais!" he cried. "What, has our stall tumbled down, I wonder?"

"Oh no, the stall is all right," an-

swered Madame Balais, laughing. "I am come to ask you about quite another matter."

"Anything in my power, you may be sure, if it is only possible."

"Oh, I felt sure of it," said Madame Balais, "I know I may count on you. I have brought you Jean-Pierre, whom you know, the son of Nicholas Clavel of Saint-Jean-des-Choux; I look upon him as my own child. Well, he wants to learn your trade; he is a willing, persevering lad, and if you take him I am certain he will do his best to please you."

"Ah, oh," said Monsieur Nivoi in a good-tempered voice, "is that all true, Jean-Pierre?"

"Oh yes, Monsieur Nivoi, I promise you I will please you if it is possible."

"It is always possible to please me," said

the good cabinet-maker, laying down his long rule on the bench.

He went to the door, and called "Margaret" twice. His wife, Madame Nivoi, came from the inn, and opened the door, and said,—

"What is it, Nivoi?"

"Draw a bottle of the best red wine, and take it into the up-stair room with a couple of glasses. Madame Balais and I have some business to settle, and we want to talk over it."

Madame Nivoi, who was a tall, nice-looking woman, dressed like the country people, then went down to the cellar, and the journeyman, Michael Jarey, a lanky fellow with a long white face, stopped his planing to listen to what was passing.

"I did not tell *you* to go for the wine, Jarey," said Monsieur Nivoi; "you may

go on with your work, Madame Balais won't mind the noise, nor I either."

He said this as solemnly as possible, while he was taking a long pinch of snuff; and, as by that time his wife appeared on the stairs with the bottle and glasses, he said, "Now, Madame Balais, I will lead the way."

They went up together into the room over the inn, it had a little window that commanded the workshop, and from it the master could see all that passed below as he leaned on his elbow and sipped his wine. He spent a good part of his mornings there, in company with his friend Panard, the land surveyor. They talked of all sorts of things, and were as fond of each other as if they had been brothers; when the bottle at Nivoi's was drunk, they went straight over to Panard's to empty as econd;



he also had a small inn on the high road. At Nivoi's, Panard paid for the wine, in Madame Nivoi's presence, and Nivoi put the twelve sous in his pocket; and at Panard's, Nivoi paid, and Panard pocketed the money; thus the wives were kept quiet; "it's the friend that pays," they thought, "that brings us twelve sous." In this way they helped to empty each other's cellars without any domestic quarrels, and this shows that money is not so necessary as people think, and that one can trade for a long time on four-and-twenty sous.

This little proceeding did not prevent Monsieur Nivoi from being an excellent cabinet-maker, and a good sensible man; he did not care about getting rich, "for," said he, "we must all die sooner or later;" and his friend Panard thought as he did.

While Madame Balais was upstairs with M. Nivoi, I stayed below, alone with Jary, who went on planing with his long thin arms, looking very cross. I soon saw that we should never be good friends, for he stopped a moment after to adjust the plane ; and, as he was tapping it, he called out, " Now then, apprentice, set about picking up the shavings, and put them in this basket."

I grew red in the face, and told him that if M. Nivoi took me, I should be there again in the afternoon, and then I would pick up the shavings.

" Ah, you are afraid of soiling your fine clothes ; of course,—of course,—you are *Monsieur* Jean-Pierre, the first in the school, the fine scholar, and you wear a hat ; of course, you cannot stoop for fear of hurting your back."

He was going on in the same style, and as I did not answer, M. Nivoi cried out of the little window above,—

“Hallo, Jary!—please to mind your own business; I do not pay you fifty sous a day to be looking out whether people wear hats, or whether they wear caps; you ought to be ashamed to torment a poor child who never answers you a word. Is it his fault if he is not such a fool as you are?”

Thereupon Jary resumed his work in a fury, and in a few minutes Madame Balais and M. Nivoi came down stairs.

“Well, it is all settled then,” said he; “Jean-Pierre will come after dinner to-day, and enter on his apprenticeship. I take him for four years: he will not be much use to me the first two years; but the two last will pay his apprentice fee.”

“If you wish to have an agreement in writing,” said Madame Balais——

“What next? A written agreement between us! Do not I know you?”

“Come along, then, Jean-Pierre,” said Madame Balais, and we went out together. M. Nivôl came a few steps with us, to explain that I was to come to work at six in summer, and seven in winter; that I should have an hour for dinner; that I should leave off at seven in the evening, and have the Sundays and holidays free. These matters being arranged, he went back to his workshop, and we returned home.

## CHAPTER VIII.

I PASSED six years with M. Nivoi ;— what labour, what sadness, and yet how much happiness came and went during that long apprenticeship ! I often live it all over again ; I hear the plane glide, the saw grate, and the hammer resound through the great workshop ; I hear, too, the chinking of the glasses in the adjoining tavern, as the hussars sing, “ En avant !— Fanfan la Tulipe.” I see the shavings roll again under the bench, and I kick them aside as I work. I see that Jary, too,

with his white face and his hair on end ; I hear him order me about.

“Apprentice!—bring me the nails,—take up the saw-dust, apprentice, and be a little quicker than that about it.”

“Ha! ha!—what is this? You have been trying your hand at joining, have you? This is a fine piece of work, to be sure; look at it. M. Nivoi will gain handsomely by you;—he had better get some old oak for you to spoil,”—and so on.

He was always in a bad temper, and could not even pass me without giving me a push, and telling me to get out of the way.

What patience one had need have, and how anxious one must be to learn, to put up with people like this, who have neither honour nor conscience. The better your

work is, the more fault they find with it, the more envious they are of you. If they dared to attack you ;—but they have not a bit of courage in them. Poor souls !—poor souls !

M. Nivoi perceived how jealous this vagabond was, and he would say sometimes,—

“Now then, Michael ! try to be a little more civil to Jean-Pierre ; you have not always been so very clever at smoothing a plank or driving a nail ; you were years enough learning, and you are not first-rate at the square and plane yet ; if we had waited for pegs till you invented them, we should have waited long enough. I won’t have you rough with the apprentice. You hear what I say ?”

Unfortunately for me, the good man was not always in the workshop, he had often

business in the town, and he had no sooner turned his back than Jary began to revenge himself for what had been said.

In the midst of it all, I had some moments of happiness, and my attachment for Madame Balais increased day by day.

I had not been at work six months before M. Nivoi gave me leave to take home some of the chips.

I filled my apron as full as it would hold, and cried as loud as I could outside our door—

“I have brought home some chips, Madame Balais, we will make a good fire, we shall always have a good one now.”

She, seeing how happy I was, pretended to think a good deal of the chips.

“I never saw such a beautiful fire as they make, Jean-Pierre, and what a heat they do throw out,” she said.



A little later on, about the end of the year, I began to know a little about my trade, and I passed all my Sundays in re-fitting the fruit loft with shelves, made of laths, and soon after I made a little summer-house for the Dubourgs in a little garden which they had rented near the town.

I did it all myself, the frame-work and the trellis-work; and it was I who fitted the inside with matting too! Little Annette came to look at it, and admired it very much; Madame Madeleine complimented me on my work also; and Madame Balais said plainly—

“Jean-Pierre will be the best workman in Saverne; he will be too good even for this part of the world. Clever workmen ought to go to the capitals, they make their way there, and always marry some

rich manufacturer's daughter ; either a musical instrument maker, or a collector of rare furniture, or something of the sort ; I have known and heard of such things scores of times ; especially at Vienna, in Austria, and at Berlin, where rich trades-folks marry their daughters to deserving clever journeymen."

She thought nothing would be too good for me ; for she loved me.

The Dubourgs were so well pleased with their summer-house that they did not contradict ; but I could see by Madame Madeleine's looks that she thought these praises too flattering, and she would have liked to take something off.

What made Jary dislike me more than anything else, was my having the chips ; he used to have them all himself, and he gave them to some of his friends in the Ruelle

des Aveugles. Well! you cannot please everybody.

However, it went on for about a year like this. I was not yet very skilful in my trade, but still M. Nivoi had often given me some small things to make; such as school-boxes for instance, and he had always appeared pleased with my work.

“It is very well, Jean-Pierre,” he would say, “it will pass, it wants just a finishing touch. This joint is not close enough; this hinge is too loose, but for an apprentice it is very well indeed.”

Naturally when Jary heard any of these remarks he was more ill-tempered than ever; he made all the fun in the world of my work, and if he could have damaged it or destroyed it he would have been delighted, but he dared not; so he would

examine it, and shrug his scraggy shoulders at every word he uttered.

“Ah! it is a fine piece of work! just hear how it opens and shuts,” he would say, moving the cover backwards and forwards. “Crick, crack! why it is a musical box, it talks; you can put the books in, and enjoy a tune at the same time. Go on, Jean-Pierre! go on, you are a promising young man, so you are.” And then he would puff out his cheeks, and hold his sides as if to keep himself from laughing.

I leave you to fancy how furious I was, and if it had not been out of respect for Madame Balais, I should soon have told him what I thought of him.

I had hard work to keep quiet, and one morning the cup ran over; I will tell you all about it, because I should like you to see who was wrong, and whether you

would not have done the same in my place.

This is how it was. At the beginning of the third year of my time, a few days before Saint Anne's, which is the 27th of July, M. Nivoi said to me in the evening, after looking at what I had been doing—

“Jean-Pierre, I am very much pleased with you ; you are really useful to me, and I must give you something,—what would you like ?”

When I heard these words my heart jumped for joy. Jary was just hanging his apron and working jacket on the nail before leaving, and he turned round to listen. I knew very well what I should have liked to say, but I did not dare speak.

Monsieur Nivoi saw my embarrassment

and went on—"Look here, my lad; you have never had anything from me," and, at the same time, he took a five-franc piece out of his pocket, and tossing it up he asked, "What do you say to a five-franc piece to spend! Speak out. How would it do in Jean-Pierre's pocket?"

I was more and more troubled, for I had long had a wish, a splendid idea, but I was afraid it would cost too dear. No! I did not dare; but, however, screwing up my courage, I answered at last—

"M. Nivoi, it makes me very happy to know that you are pleased with me; oh, very happy, especially for Madame Balais' sake."

"Yes, yes, just so," said he, in a kind voice, "but what would you like for yourself?"

“Why, M. Nivoi—but no, I dare not ask you.”

“What is it?”

“What I should like better than anything, would be to make something for Madame Balais,” and M. Nivoi kept listening as I went on.

“We have an old table at home,” I said, “a round one, with two flaps, and it is so rickety, that we are always obliged to put something under one foot to keep it steady, now, if you would have the great kindness to let me make another, it would just bedone by Saint Anne’s day.”\*

“Oh! oh,” cried M. Nivoi, as if he were half pleased and half angry, “do you know

\* In Catholic countries, the person’s *fête* is kept on that of the Saint after whom they are christened, not on their own birth-days.

what you are asking for ? A table, a round table, and walnut, I suppose ?”

“ Oh no, oak.”

“ Oak is it ? oh very well, and your week or ten days’ work, do you count that for nothing ?”

“ Oh, I will work in the evenings, two or three hours over time, Monsieur Nivoi.”

Then he seemed to consider, and coughed behind his hand once or twice without answering, and after a while, he asked, “Is it for Madame Balais’ fête ?”

“ Yes.”

“ And you have really taken it into your head.”

“ Oh, yes, nothing could make me so happy.”

“ Well then,” he said, “ so be it ; you shall work at it after time, and you shall choose the wood yourself. Come along



with me, it is not dark yet, let us go and look in the shop."

Just then Jary went away, and we went into the shop.

There were some beautiful pieces of wood there, and I cast my eyes on a fine plank of pear-tree that I should have liked, but that was too expensive. I selected a piece of oak, and then M. Nivoi said, "Pooh ! pooh, we may as well do the thing handsomely. If I were in your place, Jean-Pierre, I should choose this pear-tree."

I was so delighted that I could not speak ; I put the plank on my shoulder, and we went back to the work-shop, where I placed it down against the wall. I had what I had been wishing for the last two years, and I began picturing to myself the delight of Madame Balais.

I saw that this fine piece of wood would

make the top, and the sides, and the legs as well ; that all would be very handsome, and that I should even have some left, and my heart ran over with joy and gratitude. I had never been so happy in my life, and I am sure M. Nivoi saw it in my face, for, as I was locking the door of the workshop, he said, " Do you mean to come back to work this evening ?"

" Oh, yes, M. Nivoi, if you will allow me."

" All right, we will see there is oil in the lamp."

I was so happy that I reached our house before I knew where I was ; I could think of nothing but my table, and as soon as supper was over, I set off to work.

By the end of the third day, the pieces for my table were roughed out ; I had only to join, and then plane and polish them.

M. Nivoi came two or three times that evening, and took up my work piece by piece, and examined each surface closely, with one eye half shut.

When he had done, he said, "Now, Jean-Pierre, your work is forward enough for me to judge, and I must tell you that you have made rare good use of your three years' apprenticeship, and to speak the truth, instead of having a present of old pear, you ought to give me something."

I felt a thrill of pleasure up to the roots of my hair at hearing this, and he continued,—"I hope you will make it up to me by your work."

"Oh, indeed, M. Nivoi, I will; I will work for you as many years as you please. I do not deserve all your kindness."

"That you do," he said, "and a hundred

times over ; you are a good workman, and a good-hearted fellow, and if you keep in the same path you will be a good man. Go on then, my boy ; Madame Balais will be well satisfied with you, as I am."

Then he left me, and I got on so fast with my work that night, that all the pieces, except the top, were joined together by ten o'clock.

The next night I joined the top, smoothed and varnished it, all ready for polishing the next night.

Not a word had yet been said about all this at home, so the surprise and pleasure would be all the greater. I was all happiness ; my only fear was, that they might hear something about it by chance, and, as the day drew nearer and nearer, my pleasure and my anxiety both augmented.

During all the week Jary kept his teeth

clenched as he looked on with evil eye, but he had not spoken a word to me, nor I to him.

My table stood there at last all ready for polishing, in the corner of the workshop, and I hastened as soon as I came next morning, to go and look if it was dry enough for polishing. When what do I see? a great hole as big as your two fists just at the edge of the middle piece. I turned round pale as death, and caught Jary with a grin on his face.

“Who did this?” said I.

“It was the great plane,” said he, bursting out laughing; “such a fine piece of work should not have been under the shelf, for when a plane falls it is apt to do damage.”

“And who knocked down the great plane?”

“ I was taking it down to use,” he said ;  
“ I did.”

The words were no sooner out of his mouth, than I fell upon him like a wolf. He was a head taller than I, and his great hands were twice as big as mine, but he was down at my first blow. I knelt on his chest as he lay, and he held me tight, crying out,—

“ Ah, you dare to knock me down, you young scamp, do you ?”

“ Yes, I dare,” said I, foaming with rage, and striking him again and again in the face.

We rolled into the shavings together, and he tried to strangle me with his long bony hands ; but my fury gave me such strength that I believe I should have killed him, if Monsieur Nivoi, and two or three hussars who ran in to see what the noise

was, had not dragged me off, like one of those dogs that must be bitten before they will let go.

They held me by the arms and legs, and Jary got up, exclaiming, "I will give it to you." But as he said so I set myself free with an effort, and knocked him under the bench like a feather. He began to call out "Murder! murder!" and they had to drag me off again, and get me into the nearest room.

Then Monsieur Nivoi asked what it was all about, and bursting into tears, I said, "He spoiled my table on purpose."

"Ha! he spoiled your table on purpose, did he? the vagabond! the coward! You have served him right, Jean-Pierre; but he may boast that he has had his deserts—he will not forget it in a hurry."

The hussars looked at me with surprise, and said to each other, "Why, he was worse than a wild cat."

Madame Nivoi had taken a tub of cold water into the workshop for Jary to wash his face, and I could hear him groaning and saying,—“I won’t work any longer with that young villain, he wanted to murder me, he did.”

And as he kept on sobbing like a coward as he was, Monsieur Nivoi went back, and said,—

“You have got just what you deserved, and I am glad of it—you will not work any longer with that lad, hey? It is a good opportunity for me to get rid of such an envious blockhead. Go, and get your face plastered at Harvig’s, and you can come back—to-night or to-morrow, which you please—to be paid what is due to you ;



but you don't enter the work-shop, for if Jean-Pierre were to see you he would tear you to pieces."

"He, indeed !" cried Jary.

"Yes, he! Do not howl so loud, he is still there, and the hussars are holding him tight, but he may burst out of their hands."

We heard no more after that, and in a few minutes Monsieur Nivoi came back, and said,—

"The vagabond is gone. I have been to see the table ; we will change the middle piece, where the hole is, and it will still be ready for Madame Balais' *fête*. So console yourself, my lad, it can all be put to rights to-night."

When I came to reflect, I was quite surprised to think I had beaten Jary. I said to myself, "Ah ! if I had done that long

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ago, he would not have tormented me as he has these two years ; I ought to have begun where I have left off, but better late than never."

## CHAPTER IX.

**T**IME went on. It was some months since my battle with Jary, and another companion, a merry fellow, named Picard, who laughed, and sang, and planed all at a time, had taken the place of that scamp, and we two lived together like brothers.

Monsieur Nivoi then gave me half a day's wages (seven francs and a half a week) for myself; I need not say with what pleasure I took it home every Saturday to Madame Balais; but she made me always keep a trifle for myself for the Sunday.

“A journeyman ought always to have something in his pocket,” she said, “so that if he likes now and then to accept a glass of wine, he may have in his power to return it when opportunity offers.”

I followed her advice, and was always as liberal as my acquaintances. More than that; I went sometimes to the dancing on Sundays, at the *Panier-Fleuri* outside the town, and finely we used to enjoy ourselves; the young girls from Saint-Witt and from Dosenheim used to stop there after vespers, and some came from Saverne as well. The clarionette and the fife played away, and the merry laughter echoed under the apple-trees in full bloom. I loved dancing, and used to think when I came home sometimes of Margaret and sometimes of Christina.

It was an odd thing, but at this time I never thought of little Annette, we had become (as one may say) strangers; I looked on her as a young lady, she considered me, perhaps, in the light of a common workman, I cannot say. She was rather proud, but a good-natured girl, and with always a smile on her countenance all the same. For example, she would call to me sometimes as I came in from work of an evening. "Here Jean-Pierre, come—we have got some fritters to-night—come," and she would offer me one quite hot, and tell me to open my mouth for it.

That was like the old times; but on Sundays, when she was dressed in her best, she took no notice of Jean-Pierre in his shirt sleeves; she appeared to think herself far better than a cabinet-maker

or a carpenter, or any other workman. *She* never came to the Panier-Fleuri.

As for me, I fancied I was in love with Lisa, the forester Passauf's tall daughter. I took her up, I do not know why I am sure ; but I used to walk her round the garden after every dance, saying to myself, she is my sweetheart, and when, two or three months afterwards, she went to live with her sister in Paris, I was quite in despair, and I cried out in spirit—

“Jean-Pierre, you do not know the extent of your misery, your happiness is gone for ever !”

But a week after I had another partner, Charlotte Mériaux, the gardener's daughter, and the next week somebody else.

The term of my apprenticeship ended the early part of the following year ; then I received journeyman's pay, and many

comforts made their appearance in our little room on the third floor.

Madame Balais said we should buy our own flour at the market, and have our own bread baked at Chanoine's; she laid in a store of dry vegetables—we had potatoes in the cellar and firewood in the loft; for to buy everything in small quantities is always the dearest, and I had the happiness of seeing that, instead of being a burden to this excellent woman, I should be a help and support to her in her old age.

Two years passed thus, without bringing anything new; but in 1847 a great change came. Such years come in the lives of us all, all we have known and felt before goes for nothing; it is like the seed sown in the earth, which is seen no more, and lies as it were dead, but when the spring comes, lo! its fruits appear.

I remember, one morning, just at the beginning of spring, I and Picard were planing away and singing, and our three windows, which looked on the square where the fountain was, were wide open, and we looked up now and then at the young girls, as they came up in their short petticoats, with their pitchers or pails on their arms, chattering while waiting for their turn.

It was a lovely day! The fountain sparkled like a mirror in the sunshine; strings of cows and oxen came up to drink; some of them, after their thirst was quenched, quietly raised their pinky muzzles, and the glittering drops fell from them like so many diamonds; and some scampered off kicking out their hind legs in all directions, and setting the girls screaming. The boys also, who had brought



horses to water, cracked their whips and galloped about, and then the young women giggled and chattered more than ever.

“There is Rosalie, from the café,” cried Picard, “ah ! just look at her arms ; that is what you may call a fine woman ; and there is the shoemaker’s daughter too, she knows all the gossip of the town ; she will be a couple of hours filling her pitcher.” We went on with our work, singing, and the cracking of whips, and the lowing of cattle, the laughter and the screaming, continued.

When we looked up again, just to take breath, I saw a young girl whom I did not know, coming a long way off in the direction of the market-house ; she was dressed in a lilac gown, and wore no cap, and was tripping along at a good pace. I thought to myself, as I watched—“ What

a pretty girl! how nicely she is dressed! what a good figure she is! how well she walks!" I looked at her well, and thought, "I have never seen her before, she does not belong to Saverne; she must be a working person too, she is not a lady.

The longer I looked the more certain I felt that I did not know her; when, all at once, I saw it was Annette? She had some work to carry home in our street, to the lady of M. Tardieu, the Commandant.

I perceived, for the first time, that she was beautiful; that she had fine blue eyes and black hair; a fresh colour in her cheeks, and a sweet smile on her lips; in a word, I had never seen such a pretty girl. I was taken so aback, that I began to drive the plane as hard as I could, to look as if I had not seen her.

And while I was thus bending over my

labour, Annette, as she passed, looked in at our window (a thing she had never done before) and said, in a merry voice—

“ Ah, good morning, Monsieur Jean-Pierre ; there you are at work—you work for ever I think.”

She said this in a joke, and I ought to have answered, “ Oh yes, Mademoiselle Annette, and you are taking your work home ;” and then we should have laughed together ; but instead of that, I turned quite red and began to stammer out I do not know what ; so that Annette looked at me in astonishment.

And then Picard said—“ You must not be surprised, Mademoiselle, this fellow is in love ; so much in love, that he does not know what he is about.”

And then she said,—“ Ah, poor Jean-Pierre !—poor Jean-Pierre ! ” and hastened

away, laughing as hard as ever she could.

I was ready to sink when I heard what Picard said, and as soon as she was gone, I cried out—

“Picard, you must be a natural fool to speak in that way; you have made me miserable for all the days of my life.”

I sat down on the work-bench, with my head in my hands, and felt ready to burst into tears; I was wretched, I wanted to run away out of sight. Picard looked at me for a few minutes, and then he said—

“Listen, Jean-Pierre, I only spoke in a joke; but I now see I was quite right.”

“No, no!—it is not true.”

“If it is not true, why should you be angry?”

“Because I am ashamed you should be such a fool.”

“Oh!” said he, “you need not distress yourself about that; if I were a ten times worse fool, my health would be just as good.”

It was no use talking to such a simpleton, and I resumed my work, with the thought that I should never dare show my face at home any more.

I fancied everything could be read in my face, and that if I met Madame Madeleine, she would see it all at a glance. I need not have troubled myself; by night Annette had forgotten all about it. What difference could it make to her? Every girl has heard of a young man being in love!

Everything went on that evening as usual; I did not meet anyone on the stairs. About eight o'clock, the Dubourgs opened their windows to let in the fresh air, and, after supper, Madame Balais went

down to tell them what she had heard at the market. Two other neighbours came and sat on the seat at our door, and talked of Easter-tide and Trinity,—of the state of the poor-box,—and how much old Rosalie received out of it.

Madame Madeleine was sweeping her room, and Annette was coming up-stairs to work for her, just as I was timidly coming down, she said, “Good night, Jean-Pierre.” I began to thank God that folks were so blind; but the next day—and the next—and all the week long, seeing that Annette took no notice of me,—that she went up-stairs and down, without even turning her head when we met,—that she said, “Good morning, Jean-Pierre,—good night, Jean-Pierre,” the same as ever, neither more nor less, I cried in the very depths of my heart,—“What does it mean? She does not love

me in the least ! She speaks to me exactly like she did last year."

I was miserable. I should have liked to see a difference in her manner ; I comforted myself at last, by remembering that a year ago my greatest pleasure was to peel and eat chestnuts with that great Julie Kermann, with whom I fancied I was in love.

I was just like Annette is now, I said to myself ; she does not give it a thought,—she is a mere child ; but in a little while, six months—or, may be, a year—she will see that I am a good workman, deserving of a good girl's affection, and that we should be a happy couple. Father Antoine has always respected me, and who could Madame Madeleine wish better than me for a son-in-law ? I am not rich, it is true, but I can earn my fifty sous a day. M.

Nivoi thinks more and more of me,—and who knows?—perhaps he will raise my wages next year! The good man is getting in years; he is not as active as he was, and he will want some honest workman, sooner or later, who is able to measure and calculate, to make an estimate, and to conclude a bargain; if not just at present, it will be in a very few years; he may also give me an interest in the business, and afterwards take me as a partner. Why should he not?

Then, Jean-Pierre, who would be so happy as you, with your pretty little saving wife,—your old father, Antoine,—and your mother-in-law, Madame Madeleine,—and your own dear old Madame Balais, who would all of them love and esteem you more and more, to say nothing of the children whom we would bring up



to honest labour by our good example, and who would be the delight of every one of us.

I said all this to myself, while I was planing and sawing, and hammering. I saw it all living and moving before my eyes; it seemed to me all easy and natural, and, in the joy of my heart, I went on working without even hearing Picard's singing; I dreamed of the future for hours together; and nothing but M. Nivoi's cheery voice could rouse me.

"Hallo, Jean-Pierre, stop a bit," he said one day, "you will bring the house down if you go on like that; you make it shake from top to bottom,—you are the fellow to get through the work, it is like a saw-pit—you never stop."

Then I laughed and wiped my face, while he took a good pinch of snuff, as his habit was.

“Aye, Jean-Pierre, I am pleased with you; we don’t often meet with such a hard-working fellow.”

Then he examined the work, and said it was all well done. I was sure I should have my wages raised at the end of the winter, and I felt I should deserve it, and that made me happier still.

Madame Balais alone had guessed there was something. One morning, when she saw me stand before our little glass, to arrange my hair, tie my cravat, and give a turn to my little moustachios, and then brush myself from top to toe, once, and sometimes twice,—things which I had never done before,—she gave me a sly look, and said,—

“You are becoming quite a dandy, Jean-Pierre. Ha, ha! I should like to know what is come over you all of a sudden.

Oh, you are handsome enough ; you need not look at yourself so much ; you will do, do not be afraid."

And as I turned quite red, she added, "There is nothing to be ashamed of ; on the contrary, it is quite natural, it proves you are growing thoughtful, and wish to show respect to one ; I have always liked respect ; when a young man respects me I feel quite flattered."

When she went on like this, I knew what she meant, and I was ready to jump out of the window.

There was but one thing, however, that troubled me seriously, and that was, the conscription which was to be drawn the next year. Happily there was peace under Louis-Philippe in 1847, and in Alsace, a substitute could be got for twelve hundred francs, and then there were plenty of good

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numbers I might draw out of these, and even if I drew a bad one, I could, with the help of my old master, raise the money for a substitute, and remain at home. It might put off the marriage for a little while, but when you have all the chance of drawing a good number, and when, even if you do not, you still have a good hope ; when you are in love and all looks bright, you care for nothing ; you put unpleasant thoughts out of your head, and as for the possibility of all being overturned in a moment it does not enter into your head.

## CHAPTER X.

I WAS coming home from work one evening, it was not yet quite night, for the sun still fell on the roofs. The narrow lane of the Deux Clefs was, however, nearly dark, and I could see the two little windows of the ground-floor in our house blazing like a fire. I knew there must be something extraordinary going on, for Madame Madeleine was not given to burning the candle at both ends.

As I got near, wondering more and more what it could be, Madame Balais came out of the passage to meet me, calling out joy-

fully, "Make haste, Jean-Pierre, there are fine doings here to-night."

And directly after, Annette, who was standing at the door, said,—

"Ah! what do you think, Jean-Pierre? Aunt Jacqueline is just dead!"

I was very much surprised, but that was all; you do not perceive the great change that such an event makes, all at once.

I went then into the room; I saw the old loom pushed out of its place back against the wall on the left, the hanks of hemp, the pieces of linen, and everything else tumbled together into the corner; and, on the right-hand, near the stove, the table laid, with a fine white cloth on it, seven or eight knives and forks placed, and three candles burning in as many candlesticks, whose sockets were ornamented with fine cut papers. The kitchen was all ablaze;

old Madame Rivel, who had been cook for twelve years at the Eagle hotel before her marriage, was busy helping Madame Madeleine. There was a stuffed turkey on the spit, a dish of sausages on the top of the press, and some bottles of wine, sealed, standing on the side-board.

In a word, such a feast as I had never seen. Father Antoine was sitting on his bench with his legs across ; he stretched out his arms to embrace me, saying, " Our poor Aunt Jacqueline is gone, Jean-Pierre. She had not time to leave anything to the Church. How lucky for us ! "

" Go ! and dress yourself," he added, " and I will go and put on my best brown coat too. Captain Florentin and his wife, Madame Fretzel, Madame Balais, and my old friend Villon, the gun-smith, are coming to-night ; if there had been time I would

have invited Nivoi too, but the news only came at three o'clock."

Then he began to laugh right out. "God knows I have woven ells of linen enough ; I was getting pretty tired of it," said he, throwing up his arms.

"And I too," said Annette, who was full dressed by this time ; "I may say I have had enough of dress-making ;" and Madame Madeleine called out from the kitchen, "Oh yes, it was high time to leave off, but we can take our ease now. Put plenty of butter in the pan, Madame Revel ; here is the salt, and the pepper ; do not stint anything."

I was pleased to hear that Madame Balais was invited, and made haste to get away ; I was glad of the Dubourgs' good luck, and kept thinking it all over while I was shaving. I perceived that Madame



Madeleine would grow proud, but I never dreamt how far she would carry her folly.

As soon as I was dressed in my best clothes, I went down stairs ; the room was already full of guests. Captain Florentin was laughing loudly.

“Ha ! ha ! ha !” he said, “What a good aunt to scrape and save for you, you deserve it all, Dubourg.”

Then father Antoine, who had dressed himself in his best coat, and put on his black cravat, began to tell all about it. Looking as grave as he could, he said,—

“She was a very good woman, and we are very sorry for her, but right is right, and you see, M. Florentin, she never forgave Madeleine for marrying a plain working man ; she saved her money for the church, and when we were the worst off, she never thought of giving us a farthing.

But matters do right themselves sometimes, and now we shall have it all. Oh, justice is a fine thing."

"Aye! and we will have masses said," cried Madame Madeleine. "God is just in all things."

And Annette thought they ought to put on mourning.

Madame Balais was there, in her grand gown with the large flowers on it, but it was Madame Fretzel, a little woman as round as a ball, who was the most amusing; she pretended to believe in Madame Dubourg's grief, and kept saying, "You must try and comfort yourself, and be resigned, my dear, we must all die some time or other."

Monsieur Villon came in last; he was a cunning old fox, and had put on a solemn face for the occasion; but as soon as he

perceived the state of things, he began to laugh, and said to Father Antoine,—

“My poor Dubourg, I should like such a misfortune as yours to happen to me ; the loss, say, of an uncle, or an aunt—I should not care which—of some ninety years of age, who leaves behind them acres and hop grounds, or vine-yards, and what not ; I should not be very particular which, I would accept it all with my eyes shut.”

And then they took a pinch of snuff together.

Madame Madeleine, who had left the room to dress herself, re-appeared just as Madame Revel was serving up the sausages, and we sat down to table. Everybody did justice to the dinner ; they talked of the virtues of the aunt, then of meadows and orchards, and lastly they pitied the

fate of those who were obliged to die and leave everything behind them.

Captain Florentin spoke, too, of the property that falls into the possession of each regiment after every battle ; he said it was always put up and sold to the highest bidder ; but he added there was nothing like good landed property, and money out on sound mortgages.

“ We are going to see what there is to-morrow,” said Father Antoine ; “ they will have placed the seals on everything, but we are the nearest relations ; Madeleine was her only niece.”

“ Yes,” said Madame Madeleine, “ my mother had but one sister, poor aunt Jaqueline, of Saint-Witt, and I had neither brother nor sister, I was an only child.”

“ Dear me,” said the visitors.

I heard all that passed, but I could not

be expected to be very sorry for this aunt Jaqueline ; I had never seen her, for she never came to the Dubourgs. The consequences of the legacy to me never occurred to my mind, and so I was very comfortable.

But when supper was nearly over, Madame Madeleine began to say,—“ That now, thank God ! the Dubourgs would be in their right place ; that Miss Annette, their only daughter, would not now want to make the dresses of people not so good as herself ; that any engineer, or lawyer, or notary would be glad to have her for his wife ; that she would be a lady as well as Madame So-and-so, who was not a quarter as well off as they ; that it was an easy thing to learn to put on bonnet and shawl, and that Annette would soon get used to it.”

When I heard all this, and felt, too, that

it was every word true, I glanced at Annette, and saw her smiling as she listened; and for all the wine I had drunk, I felt my blood run cold. At the same moment Madame Balais cast such a mournful look at me, that I was ready to shriek out and rush from the place.

I wonder how I had the strength of mind to conceal my distress; it is true some were touching glasses and drinking healths, and the rest watching Monsieur Villon carve the turkey, so that my paleness and misery passed unnoticed but by Madame Balais; she understood it all, and only said, in reply to Madame Madeleine,—

“Yes, you are quite right, it is much easier to take to wearing hats and shawls, than to learn to do without when you have worn them for years.”

The company laughed, and I drank glass

after glass, I could not have kept up without.

The supper lasted till eleven o'clock, and then everybody went to their homes. Father Antoine stood at his door, with a candle in his hand, wishing them good-night.

I went up into our room, and Madame Balais followed without speaking a word. I saw it all now ; I knew that every hope was lost.

I struck the light and lighted our two lamps, and saying only "Good-night, mother," to Madame Balais, I passed into my own room and shut the door. Then I sat down on my bed-side, and one wretched thought followed the other. I passed my whole life in review—I cursed my fate.

I recalled widow Rochard's words, "That it would have been a blessing if I

had followed my father," and I thought so too. To have been taken by Madame Balais, which I had always regarded as my greatest happiness, now appeared to me the greatest misfortune. "Why did she not leave me there?" I said in my heart; "it would have been better for me. I should have been a woodman or a cow-herd; I should have passed my life felling trees, have had meat but once a year, and have been half naked; I should have been exposed to cold, and snow, and wind, and rain, but what of that? I should have known nothing better, and should not have been thus wretched.

"It is all over! I must have been mad to imagine Annette would ever love me; all she is thinking of now is being a fine lady, and Madame Madeleine dreams of nothing but engineers, and lawyers, and



notaries, for her. Monsieur Dubourg is nobody, they can lead him as they please."

All these reflections rushed through my mind like a torrent ; hour after hour struck, but I never moved ; I would have wept, but I could not, my heart was weighed down by a sorrow too great for tears.

When the day dawned I arose to go out, as I passed Madame Balais' door I heard her in the room, and she called to ask if I was going out.

"Yes," I replied, "there is work wanted in a hurry ; M. Nivoi told me to come as soon as it was light ; I shall breakfast there."

"Very well," she answered.

As soon as I got down, I began to run the town, up one street and down another ; I wanted to feel the open air ; that seemed to do me good. The doors and windows

were all shut, and the labourers, who, with their forks over their shoulders, were going to their work in the fields, wished me good morning as they passed.

At six o'clock, I went as usual to my work. M. Nivoi came into the shop ; I told him what had happened at the Dubourgs' ; he said he was very glad to hear it, and that these folks well deserved such a piece of good fortune, especially father Antoine. I made no reply, for I was overcome with grief. I left work at noon, but instead of going home to dinner, I went to the "Three Kings" and drank off a bottle of wine, but I could not eat anything.

I was back sawing and planing by one o'clock. I felt as if I was in a burning fever ; evening came at last, I must needs go home to supper ; as I reached the

house, Madame Revel announced that the Dubourgs had gone in a carriage, to Saint Witt. That was a great relief to me, it would have been a trial to me to have met them again.

## CHAPTER XI.

I CREPT up the stairs a step at a time, holding by the banisters, and as I slowly got towards the top, I heard a voice saying—

“Is that you, Jean-Pierre? I have been expecting you this hour.”

On raising my eyes, I saw Madame Balais, with her yellow handkerchief round her head, stretching out her long thin arms, with the lamp to light me.

“You are coming up very slowly,” she said.

“Yes,” I answered, “I am very weary.”

We went into our room, where there was still a little fire in the stove, and the soup tureen, covered with a plate, was standing on the little table waiting for me. Madame Balais pushed her chair towards me, and seated herself on the little bench opposite, and kept her eyes on my face.

“I am not hungry,” I said.

“Never mind, try to eat something.”

But I could not; I sat there with my arms hanging down, without attempting to raise the spoon to my mouth.

This lasted for some minutes, and then Madame Balais said, very softly—

“You love her dearly then, my poor child?”

These words pierced my heart, and I buried my head on the table and wept.

"Have you loved her long?" she asked.

"Always! I have always loved her, but more than ever since the beginning of the spring."

I then told her how surprised I was the day that Picard and I saw her pass; how I had been struck all of a sudden by her beauty, how I was dazzled by it, and how I trembled all over without daring to raise my eyes; how she looked in at the window, and said—

"Ha! there you are at work, Monsieur Jean-Pierre," and then my annoyance and my fear to go home that evening.

Then I spoke of the hopes I had formed, that she would love me in time, that I felt almost sure of it, and that then, dear Madame Balais should go some morning, and ask the Dubourgs for her for me, and that——

But I could not go on ; these recollections overcame me, and I began to cry like a child again.

While I had been speaking, Madame Balais kept saying in an under-tone—

“Aye ! aye ! it is always so. We are so happy—so happy, while it lasts.”

“But all would have been as you say, Jean-Pierre ; Annette would have loved you ; she would have seen how deserving you were of her affection ; she could not have found such another fine fellow as you in Saverne. I say a fine fellow, for you are handsome, and as good as you look. And we should all have been so happy together, your old mother Balais would have rocked the cradle and have been proud to carry the baby in her arms ; alas ! alas !”

And when she heard me weeping, she went on—

“Ah, it is the wretched money that has done it all; ah, miserable money, when you come in at one door, happiness flies out at the other.”

“They are gone this morning to look at their possessions, they had that great rogue Breslau with them—that sort of lawyer fellow, that has not got a farthing in the world. His whiskers were frizzed and his moustachios waxed like a drum-major’s; he is gone to value the property, the rascal is already sniffing the girl’s share of it. What fools those Dubourgs must be?”

When I heard this, I turned pale, and looked up at Madame Balais, but she was thinking only of her own misery, tossing her long arms above her head and running on—



“Ah, fools that they are! They are rich now; they think they shall never come to the bottom of the bag!

“Madeleine and Annette asked me to come in this morning, they wanted me to look at their plate and their jewels, but I would not. All they have got would be poor in my eyes. I have looked on something very different from that. What is that they have come into compared with what Marie-Anne Balais can boast of having had in her time?

“Ha! we had riches too in Spain; necklaces of pearls and diamonds, strings of sequins, piastres double and twice double, fine gold, red gold, carriages and furniture, and fine raiment; chasubles that shone like the sun, holy vessels, and pictures worth thousands. And what have we done with it all? We did as the Dubourgs will do, we

spent it, and squandered it, and threw it away. Aye! and the Madame Balais that is now before you, Jean-Pierre, may say, without vanity, that she was a different sort of woman from Mademoiselle Annette; she had other hair, and other eyes, and other teeth, she was tall and handsome. Balais was proud of her, and so he might be in face of every man in the army. Well, what remains now? A few old thieves who filled the baggage waggons of their company with their plunder, while they preached order and discipline; the rest, to begin with the lovely Marie-Antoinette, ended by sawing wood, or tinning sauce-pans or scouring pots, or selling apples and pears in the market, thinking themselves fortunate if they can get a few hot ashes to put in their chaufferette in winter. And he who despised money, and cared

only for kingdoms, and empires, and palaces, had at last only a rock in the midst of the ocean, and a hovel covered with tarred paper.

“All this proves, Jean-Pierre, that one penny gained by labour is better than a bag full of gold out of a dead man’s grave. These truths ought to open people’s eyes, they ought to see that an honest workman like you is as good as a scamp like that Breslau.”

What she said was very true, but I knew it all before, for she had often related her misfortunes to me, and then, the miseries of others do not cure our own.

The notion of this Breslau had made my blood curdle; I remained with my head leaning on the table, thinking of all I was suffering for no fault of my own, and I asked in my misery, why I was ever born?

She did not speak, and the silence had

lasted a long time, when she came and bent over me, took my head in her hands and kissed me.

“You do not say a word, Jean-Pierre ; you are too miserable to talk I know, my poor boy, but yet we must decide on what is to be done.”

“I must go away,” I said, without moving ; “I must go.”

“You must go away !” she echoed, “go where ?”

“Oh ! far away somewhere.”

“No ! no !” cried the poor woman, “you must not go away, it is not to be thought of. What should I do ? I cannot go with you, I am too old now.”

Then I raised my head and looked at her in despair. My hair stood on end, and I replied—

“If you say I must stay, I will stay ;

but if he comes in my way, if I set eyes on him, woe be to him ; it will soon be all over."

And as she gazed at me in surprise and terror, I stretched out my hands towards her, crying—

" Oh, my mother, forgive me ! I love you dearly. I know I am everything to you ; I meant to stay with you, and to be the support of your old age. All my happiness was to look forward to that ; but if I meet that man I shall murder him."

I must have looked dreadfully miserable, for the poor dear old thing melted into tears as she kept her eyes fixed on mine.

" You speak the truth, Jean-Pierre,—I know what you are. What could I be thinking of to want to keep you here ? If it was not that one it would be another. Yes, you must go, Jean-Pierre ; but never

fear, we shall meet again. I am not so old as people think, I have another ten or fifteen years of strength in me. Yes! we shall meet again—some day—and I will choose a wife for you, and we shall have the little children all the same; only you must keep up your courage.”

We embraced each other, and sobbed together.

“You have been a mother to me,” I said.

“Yes! I am your poor old mother Balais,” she said. “I have only you in the world, you are my joy and my pride, and now you must go! Oh! it is hard. You must go to Paris, you will become a first-rate workman—and who knows? I will go too some day, perhaps I will if it is possible—some day or other. Nivoi told me some time ago, that you ought to go to Paris, then I had other plans; but now I am satisfied it

should be so. I will go and talk to Nivoi ; you need not trouble yourself about that."

It made my heart ache to hear this brave-hearted woman sobbing, it was very hard to bear ; at last she became quite quiet, leaned her elbows on the table, and hid her face in her hands. She was thinking of all she had gone through the last thirty years, and the tears coursed slowly down her cheeks, but she did not even sigh.

Eleven o'clock struck as we sat thus in total silence ; then the poor old woman heaved a deep, deep sigh and drew out her handkerchief to wipe the tears from her face, saying, as she did it—"Good night my child."

I could not restrain a cry, and threw myself into her arms once more, repeating over and over again—"Oh ! forgive me, my mother !"

“What have you done?” she said; “it is not your fault, my poor boy, I forgive you with all my heart; it is all fate; if I could I would willingly suffer for you. It is time to go to sleep now; embrace me once more and let us go to bed.”

I did embrace her again, and then went into my room, and threw myself, heart-broken, upon my bed, and I saw, through the cracks of the door, that Madame Balais blew the lamp out almost directly.

All this passed in the month of June, 1847, and I shall never forget that date.



## CHAPTER XII.

I HAVE often thought that women have more courage than men in the great sorrows of life; instead of being cast down, they keep up our hearts and our strength.

But all the same, women of Madame Balais' stamp are rare. The next day she appeared to have recovered her firmness, and while we were at breakfast she said,—

“Listen to me, Jean Pierre; I have been thinking a good deal in the night, and this all appears to me well. At first it was a blow to me to think of losing you, but sooner or later it must have come to

that. What can you learn here? It is not at Saverne that you would ever learn to be a first-rate workman; to become that you must see the world, and the works of the best masters. And then the conscription was coming, and we should have had an anxious time of it."

She spoke very calmly, and I pretended to agree with her, but I knew, by the tears in her eyes, and by her trembling voice, that she only said all this to comfort me.

By and by she put on her shawl, and went out, saying to me, "I am going to Nivoi's."

It was a Sunday. She was a long while away, and I passed the time thinking of our miseries. The bell was ringing for Mass, and brought back the memory of the days when I used to sit at church and the little Annette next to me. I seemed to

hear the organ as I did then; I remembered too the crowd as we came out of church, and how Madame Balais would meet me in the passage, saying, "make haste up, we have something nice to-day;" and then little Annette would cry out, "and we have got something nice too." Ah! it seemed to be only yesterday. Ah, how happiness flies, and when it is lost for ever, how wretched it makes us to think of the past.

Madame Balais returned about eleven o'clock. "Everything is arranged," she said, "and Nivoi approves of it; at first, he wanted you to stay to finish your month, that he might have time to get some one in your place; but he is so pleased to see that you are going to follow his advice, that he will not stand in your way."

"He gave me what is due to you, it will

pay for your journey, and I have taken your place in the diligence for five to-morrow evening ; here is the ticket. Now I will go and get what you will want ; some new shirts, and a couple of pair of new shoes are the most important."

"Oh, Madame Balais, what courage and energy you have !"

"Pooh, pooh," she replied, "when a thing is to be done, Jean-Pierre, the quicker the better." She tried to smile at me, but it was as much as I could do not to burst out into sobs. We sat down to table, however, the same as usual, but we did not dare look in each other's faces, and at every word we spoke we had to harden ourselves beforehand, so as not to give way.

At last she said, "You will go and see M. Vassereau, will you not, Jean-Pierre ? You know how fond he is of you."

“Yes, I will go,” I replied, “immediately; I should have forgotten all about him.”

So I took my hat and went down; I was glad to get out, for it was dreadful to me to be obliged to remain quiet. As I passed the Dubourgs’ door, I felt inclined to go in and dash everything to pieces; it was not only on my own account, but on Madame Balais’ that I was so furious with them; but I reflected, that under present circumstances, they would care very little what became of anything in the old place, and passed on. I remembered I was going to see M. Vassereau, one of those I respected the most in the town, and that brought me a little to myself.

It was very hot; and the hedges along the *Ruelle des Orties* was all a-buzz with insect life. I was soon at the house, and through the wide-open door of the upstairs

room on the left, I saw my old school-master, still sitting at table, surrounded by his family. The duty of serving Mass, and the time it took to hang up his surplice and cap in the vestry, and then to come home, had made him late. He was quite another man to what he was in the school-room ; he was in his shirt-sleeves because of the great heat, and he was paring an apple for his little girl, who was seated on his knee.

“ Why, it is Clavel ! ” he cried as soon as he saw me at the top of the steps.

“ Yes, Monsieur Vassereau, I am come to bid you good-bye. ”

“ What ! are you going away ? ”

“ I am going to Paris, M. Vassereau ; a tradesman ought to see Paris once in his life at least. ”

He had made me take a seat, and his

wife and children were listening ; he approved of my resolution, and added, "that I had always been one of his best pupils, and that he was pleased I had come to see him before I went away."

"Be steady," he said, "be faithful to your religious and Christian duties, and all will go well with you."

I stayed about half-an-hour, and when I rose to leave, he went to the door with me, and embraced me cordially ; and that did me good, for it is always a comfort to enjoy the esteem and friendship of worthy people.

"I wish you a pleasant journey, Clavel," he called after me from the top of the steps ; "a pleasant journey, and good health."

And I walked up the lane, happy to have received the good wishes of such an excellent man.

It might have been about two o'clock by this time, and I determined to devote the rest of the day to taking leave of M. Nivoi ; I turned back then to the Place de la Fontaine. The old gentleman was sitting with his friend Panard, in the room over the workshop, and the hussars were laughing and singing, drinking and playing skittles by the side of the warehouse below. My old master caught sight of me at a distance, and as I came near, he called out to me, "This way, Jean-Pierre, come up."

I went through the workshop and upstairs. The bottle was standing there as usual, with a glass, half-full, on each side of it.

"Bring another glass, Margaret," M. Nivoi called over the stairs, as soon as I came in.



“So you are going away,” he cried  
“well, I am glad of it.”

I made a bow to M. Panard, and he too said, I was quite right to go ; and Madame Margaret having brought a third glass, we drank to each other's health.

“Look you, Jean-Pierre,” said M. Nivoi, “a good workman who wants to learn his trade thoroughly, must go to Paris. The very best country cabinet-makers, who fancy there are none like them, are quite surprised when they get there, to find dozens as clever as themselves, and many who could give them a lesson in even driving in pins and pegs.”

“Yes,” joined in M. Panard, “that is the place to improve, and the foreigners know it well ; for there are always plenty of Germans, and Englishmen, and Russians there, who, after staying a few years, go

back to their own country, and shew off what they have learnt in ours."

Monsieur Nivoi and Panard were dear old friends, and agreed together upon everything; what one said the other approved, and on Sundays they agreed about so many things that their noses got red over it.

I stayed there till seven o'clock, and Monsieur Nivoi wished me to remain to supper. When he learned that I was to leave at five o'clock next day, he promised to meet me at the coach-office, and to bring me a letter of recommendation to his old master, Monsieur Braconneau, No. 70, Rue de la Harpe.

As he showed me out, he pressed a five-franc piece into my hand.

"We have settled our accounts, I know," he said, "but you must do me the plea-

sure of taking this to drink my health on the road ; you cannot refuse me this time."

So I accepted ; and as soon as I got home I told Madame Balais all that had passed, and she was pleased to hear it. She had already emptied her great trunk to put in my things ; and anybody who had seen us at supper would never have guessed how miserable we both were, for we talked of my journey as if it had been the most natural thing in the world, an event that must have happened sooner or later ; that we hoped to have put off for a while, but that had come to pass sooner than we expected.

Ah, yes ! that is what we said to one another ! but I wept bitter tears all that night. I knew that my place was taken, that I was to go the next day, that per-

haps I should never again see either Annette, or the one who had taken me in, fed me with the fruit of her labour, brought me up, and loved me as her own son ; that I may never behold again the old house where I had passed my childhood, nor the old town, nor the woods and hills around it. Now and then I heard a subdued sound from Madame Balais' room, as if some one were half choked, and from time to time the good soul got up to listen at my room. I would have liked her to think I was asleep, but she knew better.

I got up before it was light next morning, and when I opened my door, I saw her seated by the side of the trunk, with her hands crossed on her lap. We were both ready to burst into tears when our eyes met, but she commanded herself, and managed to smile.

"You won't forget me, will you, Jean-Pierre?" she asked.

When she said that I rushed into my room again, and burst out into sobs, like a wretched creature as I was.

Ah! to part from those we love when there are riches is a trifle, but in poverty, and when we do not know what will become of each other, it is torture.

But I must not linger over this. I must relate my departure from Saverne if I can, and that was the worst of all.

By four o'clock my trunk was packed and locked. I had helped Madame Balais with it, listening all the time to what she said, as if it had been the voice of my very own mother: she must have seen what was passing in my thoughts, for every now and then she kept saying,—

"Make your mind easy, Jean-Pierre, we

shall meet again in better times ; this cannot last for ever, everything turns out well at last if we only keep up our courage, as for me I am quite myself again. But the hour is drawing near, Jean-Pierre, we must not be late. Here, put this in your pocket, my child, take care you do not lose it."

"What is it?" I asked her, quite surprised.

"You will not get work as soon as you set foot in Paris," she said ; "you will want a little money to keep you till you do. I had put that by in case of sickness, and also fearing how the conscription may turn. There are sixty francs there."

"And what will you do?"

"Oh, me! look here, I have money left," said she, showing me our little box with five or six five-franc pieces in it.

"Oh, I have taken care of myself," she added.

I was quite amazed. I embraced her, and then put my trunk on my shoulder, and we went out.

In the street we walked side by side, but neither of us spoke.

When we came in sight of the coach office, we perceived Monsieur Nivoi waiting for us under the gate-way. He came forward to meet us, crying out,—“You are just in good time, the diligence will be here directly.” Then he gave me the letter for Monsieur Braconneau, and I secured it in my waistcoat pocket.

My trunk lay there with five or six others, people were coming in and out, and Monsieur Nivoi kept on saying that I was right to take the step I had, that it showed decision of character.

Madame Balais stood there more dead than alive. We cast a glance at each other from time to time, but only to be mutually distressed ; she could not speak, and while we stood thus, the guard's horn was heard in the distance, and the great coach, with its piled-up luggage, and its four dapple-grey horses in front, and a number of conscripts on the roof, appeared at the end of the High Street. Every one cried out,—  
“ Here it is !”

“ Now, then, give her a kiss,” said Monsieur Nivoi.

I looked at Madame Balais, she stretched out her arms to me, but she could not speak ; then I fell on her neck and pressed her to me closely—closely.

The heavy rumbling of the diligence came nearer and nearer, then it stopped, and the jingling of the horses' bells was



heard at the gate-way ; I heard, too, the voices of the travellers, and I felt Monsieur Nivoi's hand on my shoulder, trying gently to pull me away ; but I gave no heed, I pressed closer and closer to my poor old mother Balais.

I do not know how they separated us ; but at last I found myself in the diligence with six or seven conscripts who were singing and drinking brandy. I looked back, crying out, "Mother ! my mother !"

She was leaning against the gate-way, and Nivoi was trying to get her away ; but she would not move. I opened the door to get out, but at that instant the great coach gave a lurch and started off ; the guard blew his horn, the roofs of the houses flew past, a few passers-by turned round to look and flattened themselves against the wall as we passed ; the blue sky came in

view, and then the group of firs on our right, and the little patch of vines on the left; we were out of Saverne, we were ascending the hill beyond, and as the coach toiled slowly up, I saw far off, beyond the forests, the village of Saint Jean-des-Choux, my forsaken nest. The remembrance of my poor father came over me, and while the conscripts kept laughing and singing, I bowed down my head and wept.

When we had got half way up the hill, just at the fountain, where the road turns off to Saint Jean-des-Choux, the little door was opened at the back of the coach, and the guard called out—

“Anybody like to take a cross cut with me, to stretch their legs?”

The conscripts, and some of the passengers, got down to walk across the hill with the guard, and as the coach crept slowly

along the winding high road, I leaned out of the window and stretched my gaze over the lovely valley of the Schlittenbach ; there was M. Leclerc's house at the bottom, and his summer-house on a point of the rock ; there the great woods, the ruins of Haut-Barr and Géroldseck piercing the clouds ; and beyond, the broad blue plain of Alsace. and, lying at the hill's foot, Saverne,—that dear old Saverne !—where I had passed so many happy days.

I said to myself, “ I am alone in the world once more ; some will think of me for a month, some for six ; some, perhaps, for a year,—then they will forget me in the round of their business, except when some chance brings Jean-Pierre to their recollection ; and, at last, they will remember me no more. My mother Balais alone will never forget me. Those rocks and trees,

that hill, those ruins which I have looked on and dreamt of from the time I was a child, will be ever the same ; others shall look on them ; others will think my thoughts,—but I may never see them more. Annette will be rich !—she will be married to another. Oh, God ! how sad is life !”

These reflections passed through my mind, and I was overwhelmed with grief.

We were by this time come up to the little tavern kept by old Faller ; the conscripts took their places, the guard mounted to his seat and blew his horn. The horses set off at a gallop, covering the poplars and brushwood on the road-side with dust ;—the forest was passed, and we were on level ground.

Another hour took us through the hollow of Halderlock, and the village of Quatre-Vents ; then we changed horses at the

post-house at Guise, and were soon in sight of the advance works of Phalsburg, with its draw-bridges and dark gateways, where the port-cullises hung ready to fall. We passed through the great square at a gallop ; and, a little beyond the town, we lost sight of the woods, and there was nothing before us but the flat country beyond Mittelbrunn, and, in the distance, the blue range of the Vosges fading into the sky as night began to fall.

Ah !—how sad it was to think that I should never behold the ancient hills again. As night came on, great lines of gold lay like threads on the naked plain, and on the farms and little villages, right and left, and then vanished in the darkness. The soldiers ate and drank, and sang ; the coach rolled on, the horses' feet kept time like a clock, and every step bore me further and further on my way.

I was in a corner, with my arm resting in the strap, and my eyes ached with looking. I tried to sleep, but I could not. The conscripts got out to fill their gourds at every stage,—they kept talking and laughing about the sweethearts they had left behind, and the money they had got ;\* one had twelve hundred francs from a Jew, another fifteen hundred. They were on their way to Lille, in Flanders,† to be inspected.

Not one of them expressed any regret at leaving his father and mother, his home, his native place. What was it to them if they looked on other trees and other fields ? All men do not feel alike ; sometimes we are apt to think it would be better for us

\* As substitutes for those who had drawn a bad number.

† Lille *was* in Flanders at this date.

if we were all like stocks and stones, and cared for nothing.

One change of horses followed another ; the moon and stars that had shone brightly at first, were hidden by clouds ; the conscripts snored, and I watched the ground as it ran past.

After a long time we reached Luneville, where some dragoons were on duty before a guard-house. A gendarme, with his great hat on, came and looked into the coach, as a matter of form, but he did not awake anybody, for the guard told him they were only conscripts.

We resumed our journey ; and at about three in the morning, we arrived at a large town with broad paved streets and handsome houses ; it was Nancy. The coach pulled up at the court-yard of the Hôtel de l'Europe, as could be seen by the great

letters on the front. The guard told us we had half-an-hour to stop, and everybody got down; but what could I do in the middle of the night, in this strange town? A gentleman, with a napkin on his arm, came and asked if we would take anything; two or three of the passengers followed him into the great hotel, and the rest dispersed themselves right and left. As for me, I sat down on a bench in the moonlight. Just before me, a street led down to a magnificent gate made of massive iron, and all gilt; and beyond was an open space, and a palace with a sentry walking up and down. I had never seen anything so handsome as this wide street, and the gate, and the *place*. I went down to the iron gate and looked in; all was silent, except the voices of my late companions in the distance, and the step of the sentry as



he walked up and down in front of the palace, whose windows shone in the moonlight.

Oh, there are some rich people in the world!

I should have liked to have gone a little way to the left, where there were two fountains under some trees, and a statue in the middle of the *place*, but I was afraid I should not get back in time, so I went and sat on the seat again to be ready for the coach.

The keeper of a small tavern had opened his door to attract the travellers, but only the conscripts went in.

I remember all this very well, because it was the first time I had ever been in a great town. I thought to myself, if Nancy is but an ordinary town what must Paris be? How can one ever find their way

about the streets? I sometimes fancied Paris must be splendid, and at others, that it was something awful.

At half-past three, the guard and the helpers brought out the fresh horses, and a great many beggars, both men and women, came asking for charity.

Day was just beginning to break, and as we were going to take our places, the guard, a fat full-faced man—with a red nose, and with a hare-skin cap on his head, and great sheep-skin boots coming up to his knees, said to me—

“Are you inside with the conscripts?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, if you will come outside you will be better off.”

I accepted his offer and took my seat by his side. Half of the conscripts were left at Nancy, so that we were all by our-

selves and the postillion on the horses before us.

We resumed our journey then in this order, and as my face pleased the guard, he asked me, as he let down the drag, what made me look so unhappy, whether I had drawn a bad number. I told him no, but that I was sorry to leave my native place, that I was a journeyman cabinet-maker, and knew nothing of Paris, where I was going to try to get my bread.

Then this good sensible man said—I was very wrong to fret about that; that one must leave their village sooner or later, unless they had made up their minds to be ignorant for ever, and to live on nothing but potatoes to the end of their days. He gave me the history of three or four of his acquaintances who had made fortunes at Paris by their labour, and he mentioned

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their names, such a number, such a street ; I was surprised at his good memory, and his words inspired me with confidence.

While we were talking in this manner we passed through Toul, where I noticed a very fine church.

The fresh air, the sight of the great horses as they galloped, the views of the fields, the meadows and vineyards, the rivers, the groups of trees, the poor hovels, such as we find in Champagne, all combined to take my attention off my own griefs.

The guard had a bottle of wine by his side, and passed it to me every time he drank, saying—"Help yourself, young man."

After Toul we passed through Commercy, Bar-le-Duc, and Vitry-le-Français. At Vitry all the passengers got out to dine,

and I took one of Madame Balais' apples, some sausages, and a piece of bread out of my pocket, and dined on that.

I remember, that after having travelled all day, we had to travel all night; but the fatigue of sitting up so long, joined to the sleepless night I had passed before setting out, was so great, that I slept on the coach soundly.

When I awoke I found my legs were wrapped up in a sheep-skin, and the dew pouring off the leather apron before us; the country was enveloped in a white fog, the guard was asleep in his corner, but the postillion was in his place bolt upright with his triple cape on his shoulders and his whip in his hand; and the heavy horses were galloping away in front as hard as ever.

It might have been about three o'clock.

I found, afterwards, that we were then just past Caulommiers, and after that I remember we passed some small villages while I was half asleep. We stopped every two hours to change, the horses neighed and the guard roused himself up and got down ; the insiders were shut up fast asleep, and drops of water trickled down the windows. It all seem to me like a dream ; I only got down once. It was only when it was broad day, when I felt the guard giving me a good shake, and saying—" It seems we do not mean to empty the bottle," that I thoroughly awoke, and drank a good draught of the wine.

The sun was already high ; it must have been near seven ; we were travelling over a splendid road through a great wood ; I remember how surprised I was to see the trees numbered all the way.

The conductor told me this was the forest of Vincennes, and that in another hour we should be in Paris.

These words made me thoughtful, and even timid, for the chat of the jolliest guard in the world cannot prevent you from thinking seriously when you are coming to seek your bread in a great city, where scores of others arrive every day with the same intention.

## CHAPTER XIII.

AS we approached Paris, the villages were larger, the houses higher, and they had more windows; and the signs, which in our country are never put anywhere except over the doors, were put up on the first, and second, and third story, and even up to the very roof, in all colours, red, blue, and yellow. Along the street were cafés, and inns, and shops; and the houses had a sort of linen roof in front of them to screen foot passengers from the sun or the rain.



A crowd of people, some in blouses, some in coats, some in hats, some in caps, were running hither and thither like so many ants.

On the right-hand, and on the left, I saw high brick chimneys, some square, some round, throwing out their smoke, and I felt as if something great and splendid and wonderful, was before me.

Behind us, on the left, lay a great square fortification ; the guard had told me it was Vincennes.

I kept my eyes wide open, but I became oppressed as I thought—

Here I am then, close to Paris ! I am going into that great city of which I have heard talk ever since I was born ! and of which all skilled workmen and well off citizens, and rich people, alike said—

“ Ah ! there is nothing like Paris.”

When I saw all these crowds of people, and the increasing number of vehicles, I said to myself—"Ah, yes, they say truly, Paris is something new for a man to see. Happy are they who can get a living there, where journeymen are but apprentices, and thorough masters of their trade, but workmen."

The road was broader now than before, raised and paved in the middle; and far off, as far as one could see, two high buildings that seemed to reach the very clouds. The coach was dashing along like thunder, and many other carriages passed us, all full of people, and there were a sort of diligences open at the back, and two steps to get in and out.

"These are the omnibuses, young man," said the guard, "we shall soon be there. Those two high towers with the iron gates

between them, are the Barrière-du-Trône, you won't forget that ; and after that, we shall come to the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. That great dome on the left is the Pantheon, and those two great square towers, Nôtre-Dame. That is Saint-Sulpice ; that the Tour-Saint-Jacques, and yonder, so far you can hardly see, is the Arc-de-Triomphe."

There were hundreds of houses in every direction for a couple of leagues round, and we were still some distance from Paris. The two towers the guard called the Barrière-du-Trône were so far off that they did not appear to belong to each other, and it was nine o'clock before I saw the gates between them.

Then all kinds of vehicles were coming in strings of five, six, and seven, one after the other, and all kept to the side of the

road to let us pass ; for we came in at full speed, as if we were going to tear up the very stones. The guard began to fold up his wraps, and called out as we passed through the gates—"Now we are in Paris."

We stopped for a moment to let the Custom-house officer get up, and while he was busy examining the parcels, we were tearing along the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which Picard had represented to me as a perfect paradise.

We were in Paris at last ! Ah, nobody but a person from the country can tell what it is to see Paris for the first time ; they can have no idea of all those rows of houses six or seven stories high, with their countless windows and hundreds of chimneys ; of the crowds on the causeways, going backward and forwards for ever, like Father Antoine's shuttle ; of its files of

vehicles, of its greasy pavements, its murky atmosphere, its smells of all sorts, as one has never smelt before : fried fish, spices, fish-shops and butchers ; of the great carts full of sweepings, of the cries in the street, of the hurly-burly, the cracking of whips, the creaking of wheels ; how can I give any notion of it ?

I was almost stunned with the noise and confusion amidst which our heavy carriage made its way further and further into the city ; it was the same in all the streets, right and left, and through it all, we reached a large open place, in the midst of which stood a tall column, and amid all the din I heard the guard say, " Place-de-la-Bastille."

I saw the column covered with letters of gold, and hundreds of men going and coming in every direction ; I saw flower girls in

broad straw hats, and their large flat baskets full of roses slung before them. I saw men with little fountains strapped on their backs and the taps just under their elbows, who served out something to drink to the passers-by. I saw so much, that I cannot remember half of it, I had but a short glimpse of it all, for in another minute we had left the *place* behind us, and the guard, having settled his parcels to his satisfaction announced "The Boulevards."

Ah, I have often been to Paris since, but I never felt the same admiration and the same surprise as I did then. Just fancy a street four or five times broader than any of the others, with splendid houses on each side, with their endless ranges of balconies ; a street so long, that you could not see to the end of it, and as you went on, follow-

its sweep, more houses, more balconies, more signs as far as you could see.

The guard called out—" *Boulevard Beaumarchais—Boulevard du Calvaire—Boulevard du Temple—Place du Château d'Eau—Boulevard Saint Martin.*" He pointed out also some theatres, La Gaité—L' Ambigu—La Porte Saint Martin ; but we passed so quickly that I had not time to look at them. Everywhere I saw the same crowd, the same tumult ; carriages, horses, gentlemen, ladies, and everywhere there were the same cries in the street, and all the rest of it.

All of a sudden the diligence turned down a narrower street at a gallop,—

"La Rue Saint Martin !" cried the guard. "Put your things together, young man, we are almost at the coach-office."

As we passed through the street, the

tall, old, dirty-looking houses, with their hundreds of signs of every colour, seemed to me to be hanging over it. The diligence made a terrible noise as it went along, and the people crowded closer together, but without slackening their pace, as it passed them.

At this moment the windows of our coach were crowded with the red caps of the conscripts, who were all leaning out to see.

"There is the Halle au Blé," said the guard, speaking for the last time; and a few minutes after we drove, at a foot pace, under the great gate-way of the Cour des Messageries\* in the Rue Saint Honoré, and hundreds of people crowded round our diligence directly.

A great many other diligences were drawn

\* The starting place of the diligences to all parts of France.



up in this yard, and more continued entering. As we got out, one by one, some of the people round held out cards to us, and bawled out,—“The hôtel d’Allemagne” —“The hôtel de Normandie!” as loud as they could. Others in blouses, with porters’ *hottes*\* on their backs, asked us where we were going.

I did not know which way to turn, and I looked after the guard, but he was gone into the office, and stopping at the opening in the wire work, with his way-bill under his arm, ready to make up his accounts with the clerk.

The relatives of the other passengers were standing around, men, women, and children; they had come to meet their brothers, or sisters, or cousins. Some were

\* The “*hotte*” is a sort of cradle borne on the porter’s back.

embracing, others calling for cabs, others laughing.

I was all by myself; they saw well enough I was poor, and offered their services to the rest first. I stood looking on while the diligence was unloaded, and I did not feel at all at ease in this crowd of people, many of whom had very bad-looking faces; if they were to steal my trunk, what would become of me? As I stood there, just as if I had fallen from the clouds, not knowing where to go, a person came up to me, and said,—

“What! is that you, Jean-Pierre?”

And when I looked at him I saw it was Montborne, one of my old school-fellows at Monsieur Vassereau's. He had on a little blouse that was strapped round his waist, and under his arm he had one of the *hottes* I had noticed. As soon as I saw it was my

old school-fellow, I could not help putting my arms round his neck, and said,—

“Oh, it is you, Michael.”

“Yes it is,” he replied, good-naturedly.

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

“Oh, I carry luggage,” he answered;

“I have been a porter these two years.”

He was a small, thin man, and he squinted, but strong all the same, and I thought God Almighty himself had sent him to me.

After we had embraced each other, well pleased, he asked me what brought me up from the country, what I meant to do?

“I am going to look out work, as a cabinet-maker, I have brought a letter from Monsieur Nivoi.”

“And where are you going?”

“To the Rue de la Harpe.”

“Ah!” said he, “that is a long way,

but you stop here ; I have to take something just by, and I will come back and carry your trunk. But you will have to pay me thirty-two sous. You see I am married, another fellow would ask more."

"All right," I replied, "make haste back, I will wait here for you."

He went his way, but a great weight was lifted off my heart. I saw my trunk on the floor in the office with several others, and I kept close to it.

The bustle and noise still went on, back in the yard and in the street, and, as I listened to it, I could not have supposed it went on always the same ; I have, however, found out since that it is never quiet, day nor night, in Paris.

It was a quarter of an hour before Montborne returned, and I was beginning to get uneasy.

"Now, then! that is done," said he,  
"which is your trunk?"

"That one."

"And where is the ticket of it?"

"Here it is."

"All right."

Then he pulled my trunk from under the others, stuck it up on end on his *hotte*, slipped a cord round both, and hoisted it on his shoulder.

"Now, then," he said, "follow me."

So we went out, and I followed him, step by step. As we walked on, he said,—

"Your letter is to a master cabinet-maker in the Rue de la Harpe, is it not?"

"Yes."

"But you are not yet hired?"

"No."

"You are not going to live in the house?"

“No.”

“Well, then, you must lodge in the neighbourhood; let me manage. I know a place in the Rue des Mathurins Saint-Jacques where the lodgings are ten sous a night; by the month it is seven, and eight, and ten francs, that depends on the room. You will see. But they all pay in advance.”

“Very well,” I replied, “take me there, and if you know any place where I can get my meals cheap, show it to me before you go.”

“Well,” he said, “there is Flicoteau’s, a very good restaurant, close by.”

“But it is dear, perhaps.”

“Not so very; it depends on what you order; if you dine on beef and drink water, it costs from eight to ten sous; but if you order [chicken and wine, it

comes to sixteen or eighteen sous, and even more."

I soon made up my mind, that with bread and beef, and a good drink of water, I should never require chicken and wine. We were passing by a great building, all surrounded by railings and all covered with sculptures ; Montborne told me this was the Louvre, and as we turned round by the right-hand corner of the railings, I saw, for the first time, the quays that border the Seine, the Pont-Neuf, which crosses it, and the statue of Henry IV. on horse-back, which is on the middle of the bridge.

From this point you can judge of the extent of Paris ; standing on the Pont-Neuf you have, on the right, the Louvre, which stretches as far as you can see ; and three miles off, at the end of a mag-

nificent avenue of trees, the Arc-de-Triomphe.

On the other side you have the Palais de Justice, the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, and the "Isle de la Cité," covered with ancient houses that are reflected in the river.

I did not know the names of all these places then, but I was overcome with wonder and admiration. The succession of bridges, (all covered with people,) that spanned the river, astonished me as much as anything. The place seemed to me as large as all Alsace, and if I had not been obliged to follow Montborne, I should have stopped a long while looking.

There were stalls then on each side of the Pont-Neuf, where fried-fish was sold; but I am told they have been pulled down.



After having crossed the bridge, we turned along the quay, with its stone balustrade, and further on we reached the old Rue de la Harpe. This street seemed to me as if it went under ground and came out again further off, where it leads to the old Place Saint Michael.

I had seen so much of palaces and cathedrals, and triumphal arches, so many splendid houses, so many rich people's carriages, and was so dazzled by it all that when I got into this old, dim, tumble-down street, I felt quite relieved. The men were in their shirt-sleeves, some smoking their pipes at their windows, some carrying water on their shoulders: the women in cotton jackets and short petticoats, busy running from house to house, or frying fish at their doors,—they seemed to have lived there from father to son for generations.

I even fancied this street had a look of Saverne, it was so old!—so old! And there were old iron shops, and under the old door-ways were ensconced sellers of old books, and braces, and old shoes.

Ah! I said to myself, we are no longer among the rich, and my heart warmed to the people, who, like myself, worked, and bought and sold for their living.

Montborne told me this was the “Quartier Latin;” he took a turn to the right and stopped at a narrow house, at least six stories high.

“This is it, Jean-Pierre,” he said.

It was near an old edifice that lay back, there was a low wall in a line with the street, and over this wall you could see the old place with its little Gothic windows, like those at the Convent of Marmoutier. I found out afterwards that it was the

Hotel Cluny, and that all the old things in the country were kept there.

My lodging-house was a little further on ; I can see the old gable roof still. Montborne went into the passage, which was so narrow that his *hotte* grated against the wall on each side, and so dark that you could hardly see ; a smell of leather, and many other things went up your nose, and noises of all sorts filled your ears ; there was a hammer knocking, a lathe humming, somebody singing, and the noise of the street besides.

We got, at last, into a little court about six or eight feet square, and when I looked up at the sky, it seemed to me I was at the bottom of a well. As I was staring about, some one opened a pane of glass in a window on the ground-floor, and called out—  
“ Who is there ? ”

"A traveller," answered Montborne.

The door at the end of the passage was immediately opened, and a square-set man, with a dirty cotton night-cap on his head, his shirt sleeves rolled up, and a last in his hand, came out and looked at me. Following this man, who I could see was a cobbler, was a thin little grey-haired woman, who eyed me like a mag-pie.

"Do you want a bed for the night?" asked the cobbler.

"No, sir, — I want a room by the month."

"Very well," he replied, "Jacqueline will show you the rooms."

"He is a journeyman cabinet maker," said Montborne.

And the woman, who had been looking at me all the time, put on a smile.

“Ah ! he is from the country. This way, sir.”

She had taken down the bunch of keys, and she climbed up the stairs before me, Montborne following slowly.

“You will be very comfortable,” she said.

We went up, and up, and up ; the court was lower and lower down, and I dared not look out of the windows, for I thought I should fall head foremost.

“We have rooms at all prices,” said the old woman, “but young men generally want something cheap.”

“Yes ! if you could let me a room for six or seven francs,” I said.

I had hardly spoke, when she turned sharply round, as if offended, and said,—

“Six francs ! it is not worth while to go any higher.”

We were already under the tiles, and the old body, whose face seemed transformed into stone, said, "Let us go down, we have nothing lower than eight francs, paid in advance."

Then, having recovered my surprise a little, I replied,—

"Well ma'am, let me see the room at eight francs."

She went up the last stairs, and pushed open a door. I looked in; it was a corner under the roof. There was a little worm-eaten bedstead, with a quilt, and a mattress about the thickness of a muffin on it; by the bed stood a table, with a water jug, and in the roof itself, was a garret-window of four panes of glass.

It seemed to me a miserable place to live in.

“Make up your mind,” said the old woman.

And when I reflected that I was not at all sure of getting work directly, that I had nobody to lend me a penny, and that in that city where everybody thinks of only himself, I must make my money go as far as I could, I replied,—

“Well as it is the cheapest you have, I will take it.”

“And you will do well,” she said, “we do not keep our rooms long.”

As we came down, she pointed to a sort of filter, and said, “There is the water.”

Montborne and I went up again, he thought the room a very good one, especially as there was room to spare in it for the trunk.

Then, as he was in a hurry, I paid him his thirty-two sous; he told me that I

should find the eating-house a couple of doors higher up, near the hôtel Cluny, and then he went away.

I shut the door, and sat down on the bed-side, with my face in my hands, so cast down at being thus alone, helpless and friendless, in the great city, that, for the first time in my life I thought I would enlist. "What is the world to me?" I asked myself. Others have homes, and wives and children, or else they have fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters ; as for me, I have only my poor old mother Balais. If I enlist, I shall learn my drill, and shall have food, and clothes, and lodging, and no anxiety.

I shall help to keep order ; if the working men stir, if they revolt, I shall do as my regiment does. M. Nivoi will not be pleased with me, but I cannot help that, I



cannot exist here all alone, with people who only think of getting your money out of you, who smile in your face as long as your purse is full, and turn their backs on you as soon as it is empty.

I was out of heart. There was nobody by to say a word to keep up my spirits, and as for the thought of home, I could not bear it.

While I was ruminating thus, I recollected that M. Emmanuel had told me to go and call upon his son, my old school-fellow, who was a law-student in the Quartier Latin.

Ah ! if I could only have an hour's talk with him what good it would do me. I soon recollected that he lived at No. 7, Rue des Grès, but where was I to find that, in Paris ? I thought, however, I would try.

Just then, the old woman entered ; she

laid a clean towel across the water-jug, saying, "You will have your sheets changed once a month ; you know it is eight francs a month, paid in advance."

I then saw why the towel came so quickly, and having paid, I asked if the Rue des Grès was not somewhere in the neighbourhood ?

"It is not far off," she said. "Do you know anybody there?"

"Yes, a law-student, an old schoolfellow of mine."

"Oh, indeed !" she replied, evidently much impressed ; "my husband will tell you better than I can where it is. If you want anything else, please to say so."

"The only thing I want just now, is to be left to myself," I replied, and she went away. Then I opened my trunk, took out a change of clothes, dressed and washed.

The noise of the street came to me even over the roof, and the sun shone full on my little window.

After having securely locked both my trunk and my door, I went down stairs, praying that in my extremity I might find Emmanuel at home, to give me some good advice, and to keep up my courage.

## CHAPTER XIV.

AS I went down, I saw more plainly what a poor house it was; the stairs were covered with dirt out of the street, and the rope which did duty for banisters to the upper flight, shone with grease; the little doors on the different floors were all numbered, and at each was an old straw mat. There were a few mouldy flower-pots outside some of the windows of the six stories that looked into the court; all sorts of things too were hanging out of the windows; and old rusty

pipes ran down to the bottom of the court carrying off the dirty water from the different floors. Tailors, tin-men, turners, and dress-makers, dwelt there ; hammering, whistling, singing, or sewing, without as much as looking at each other. Ah ! all that showed me what Paris was ; if there are magnificent palaces and splendid hotels, and gilded balconies by the mile, there are too, places where the sun never shines and where men and women hopelessly toil, year after year, for ever and ever.

I no longer thought, like Picard, that the capital was an earthly paradise ; the lower down stairs I got, the darker it was. I was feeling my way into the passage, when the *portier* called out—

“ Hallo, young man ; you want to go to No. 7, Rue des Grès, do you not ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Well, turn up this street to the right, and take the first turning to the left ; that will take you to the Place de la Sorbonne, and beyond that is the Rue des Grès. You have a friend a student ?”

“ Yes, an old school-fellow.”

“ Oh, indeed,” said he, with a glance at his wife.

“ Well, do not forget ; turn to the right when you go out, then take the first on the left, then cross the Place de la Sorbonne,” said he, resuming his work.

I made my way along the street, through old clothes men, water carriers, charcoal sellers, and vehicles of all kinds. I did not forget the porter's directions, and amidst the noise of the drays, and the cries of “ Look out there,” from the drivers and a hundred other cries, all new to me, I soon found the Rue des Grès, on the right of

the Rue Saint Jacques. It reached as far as the old fountain, Saint Michael's ; and I saw nothing but book shops all along, the café (patronized by the students) at the end, and the guard-house half-way down the street. I have it all before my eyes now. I went along slowly, looking for No. 7, and I found it, just over a sign—"Froment-Pernett, bookseller."

Then my heart began to palpitate. How would Emmanuel receive me? he would be a judge or something else very grand some day, and I should never be anything but a plain tradesman.

While these thoughts were passing in my mind, I entered the hall ; there was a plaster statue of a young man, with a wreath of flowers on his head, and in his hand was a glass globe. Close behind this statue was a glass door ; I was considering

whether I might dare to open it or not, when a fat woman, with a pimply face, came out and asked me if I wanted to see anybody in the house.

“Yes ma’am, I wanted to see M. Emmanuel Dolomieu.”

“No. 11, second-floor,” she said, and went into her lodge again.

I went up a nice clean stair-case, and found No. 11 on the second-floor. The key was in the door. I heard laughing and singing, the people in this hotel were merry; it was not like mine in the Rue Mathurins Saint Jacques, where they slaved from morning to night without taking breath.

I listened for a few seconds to the women who were singing in the house, and then knocked softly at Emmanuel’s door; he answered—



“Come in.”

I opened the door, and there he was in a sky blue dressing gown, seated, writing at a table that stood between two large handsome windows, and was covered with heaps of old books.

On the left side of the room stood his bed, with white hanging curtains, and over his black marble chimney-piece was a handsome chimney glass, and an elegant clock.

He looked round, and stretching out his arms, cried—

“What, is it you, Jean-Pierre?”

The mere sound of his voice did me good, and we embraced each other just as we used to do when we got out of the river together in the valley of the Roche Plate.

“Well to be sure! is it really you?” he said, “I am so glad, you bring the smell

of the country with you. You must come and dine with me to-day."

He laughed, but I felt myself turning pale.

"Why, what is the matter with you, Jean-Pierre?" he said.

"Oh, nothing is the matter, it is only the pleasure of seeing you, and of being so kindly received."

"So kindly received indeed!" he cried. "I should be a pretty fellow if I received you otherwise. Come, come, sit down there, in that arm chair. Fancy, I had a letter from my father yesterday, he tells me of the fortune the Dubourgs have come into—but that is all the news he sent."

It did me good to see how pleased and happy he was at my visit; while he was going backward and forward, busy taking

off his smart gown, washing his hands and face, running a comb through his light hair and his beard, he kept on talking.

“Oh !” he said, “how lucky ! I have just done all my work. I will take you about, never fear, Jean-Pierre, you shall see all Paris.”

While he was getting ready, I told him the particulars of the way the Dubourgs came by the fortune, but never said a word of my love for Annette. He commended my wish to perfect myself in my trade, and, as I could not help expressing my fear that I should not get work immediately, he replied, as he put on his coat, and his white hat—

“Pooh, pooh, a good workman like you will not stand idle, I am sure. Do not make yourself uneasy ; and as M.

Nivoi has given you a letter of recommendation, let us go at once and see what it will lead to."

He looked at the address, and said "why, it is only a few steps off; come along, we will see all about it."

I had no longer any fears; Emmanuel with his frock-coat, his blue silk cravat, his white hat, his little peaked beard, his ringing voice, and his good heart was my providence. What a difference it makes whether one is a student or whether one is to labour for one's bread! However, when learning is well bestowed, we ought to be glad to see it.

We went down the Rue-des-Grès, arm in arm, swaying ourselves to and fro as others did, and looking up at the girls who were smoking cigarettes at the windows; for this was a street inhabited by

the students ; most of them had either red or blue caps stuck on the side of their heads, and most of them had women by their side, who came to visit them without any respect for themselves, and in consideration for their youth—I may as well tell you that at once, for it is the truth. These women, then, went everywhere with them, as if they had been their wives ; to the dancing places, and so on, and I have seen some even smoking pipes to please them.

I could tell you a great deal more, but I only want just to give you an idea of the old sloping street, with its shops full of books stuck up open against the window inside, and the stands outside loaded with old volumes, and the students standing reading them ; of the women and girls walking about, staring up at the

windows, and saluting their acquaintances just like young men.

“Hollo! Jacques,”—“hollo! there Jules,”—“how d’ye do?”—“I am coming up,” and so on.

I should like to describe to you the old fountain Saint Michael, at the end, with its round basin, and the niche over it; its two great iron spouts always surrounded by the women of the quarter, and the water carriers with their casks, in carts, ready to be filled; and the old Place Saint Michael itself, that I have seen so often damp and dirty, surrounded by old decayed buildings, and always full of noisy people, and thronged with vehicles; it would take me weeks and months to describe it all;—the old Place Saint Michael, the Place de la Sorbonne, the Rue de l’Ecole de la Medecine, the Rue des Mathurins

Saint Jacques, the Rue Foin, and the Rue Serpente, were all one as old as the other, and all led to the Rue de la Harpe ; whence there was a jumble of wine shops, poor lodging-houses, and breweries, all the way to the old bridge opposite the Cité.

In the midst of this confusion, between the roofs and chimneys, and the old gables, you could distinguish the Sorbonne, the Hôtel Cluny, the Baths of Julian (which are all older than the ruins of Geroldseck), the Ecole de la Medecine, and other places. What more can I tell you ?

We went along through all this, Emmanuel had seen it so often, that he was got used to it ; as for me I was thinking all the way, now if I get work, I shall be all right ; what a difference

to live in Paris, or to live at Saverne, where they think as much of a sergeant-de-ville as if he were a marshal of France, and of a sub-prefect, as if he were the king. Yes ! coming to Paris changes one's notions a little, certainly.

We were passing down the Rue de la Harpe ; when Emmanuel stopped at an open gateway, and looking up he said—

“ No. 70, Braconneau, cabinet-maker. This is it, Jean-Pierre,” and then I began to be as frightened as ever.

Beyond the entrance was a large light court-yard, and at the end of the court, a sort of hall, supported by pillars. I already heard the sound of hammers and saws, and planes, and my grand ideas took flight.

Emmanuel walked straight in before me, just as if he had been in his own room ; as we



crossed the court, we noticed three or four workmen busy nailing up packing-cases ; and on the right hand, we found a little office, where a young girl, seated near the window, was busy writing.

I saw no more, for Emmanuel had asked for M. Braconneau, and a tall thin old man, whose hair was gray, but whose eyes were still bright, appeared in his jacket and shirt sleeves, and his apron on ; "I am M. Braconneau," he said.

"Well then, sir," said Emmanuel, speaking with the greatest ease, "I have brought you a worthy young fellow, and a steady workman, who is anxious to get into your employ, if it be possible. He has just come up from the country, and, you know, sir, one is apt to be shy at first, and glad to be recommended by the first person they meet with."

"You are a student, I suppose?" said the old gentleman, smiling.

"Yes, a law student," replied Emmanuel ;  
"and this was a school-fellow of mine."

The workmen went on with their work, but the young girl looked out of the office window : she had dark hair, and large dark eyes, and a pale complexion.

"Is your book\* in order?" said Monsieur Braconneau.

"Yes, sir, and I have brought a letter from Monsieur Nivoi for you."

"Ah ! It was you Monsieur Nivoi wrote to me about, was it?" he cried. "We have not much work in hand just now, but never mind, we must see what can be done. Is Monsieur Nivoi pretty well, and business satisfactory?"

\* All workmen are bound to keep a book—"livret"—in which their daily conduct is registered by their employers.

“ Yes, sir.”

“ I am very glad to hear it.”

He opened the letter, and took it into the little office, and we followed. He asked us to sit down.

“ Look over this, Claudine,” he said.

She was his daughter, and I knew afterwards that Monsieur Nivoi had nursed her often when she was a little child. When she had read the letter, the old master again said,

“ Business is not very good, and I have as many workmen as I want ; but for all that, we cannot pass over an old friend’s letter of recommendation, can we, Claudine ?”

“ No,” said she, “ a journeyman is always at a loss when he first comes to Paris ; they want a few weeks to turn round.”

“ Well,” said Monsieur Braconneau, “ let

us cut it short. I shall not give you full wages ; you shall have three francs a day for the present, and if either of my men leave, you shall take his place ; will that do for you ?”

I accepted fast enough, and with thanks, as may be supposed ; I would have taken half the money to begin with.

“ Well, then, you will be here to-morrow at six o’clock,” and he went out of the office to resume his work.

He was a plain-dealing, straight-forward man, with plenty of common sense. Emmanuel thanked him and Mademoiselle Claudine also, and we came out as happy as kings ; I was ready to dance with joy.

“ Do you know that Mademoiselle Claudine is a very pretty girl ?” said Emmanuel to me.

But I was not thinking of that, I was

like a conscript that has drawn a good number, I could not see before me.

When we got into the street, Emmanuel said,—

“ Well, are you pleased ? ”

“ Pleased ! ” I cried, “ you have put new life into me. ”

He laughed. We had returned, by this time, to the Place de la Sorbonne, and were going along the narrow street that runs past the old edifices with their great grated windows. We passed by two great archways, and Emmanuel made me go through into an ancient paved court, surrounded with buildings, just like a barrack, and the great dome of the Sorbonne above all.

“ Now look at those two doors opposite, ” he said ; “ there are professors there lecturing all day, on Latin, and Greek, and

history, and mathematics, and everything you can think of. They are the cleverest men in France, and anybody may go and listen to them.

“In another building, behind this one, is the School of Medicine, where they only lecture on medicine; in another, on the Place du Pantheon, the lectures are on the laws; and, in another, Rue Saint Jacques, they are on history and government. In a word, any one may learn if he likes, he has only to make up his mind.”

I was struck with admiration, especially as he told me it cost nothing; that a good fire was kept up in all these places, all the winter long, and that the country paid these learned men for the public instructions they gave for the benefit of the young.

A great many students were just coming out, with books and papers under their

arms. None of these students had red caps on, they wore napless hats and black coats out at the elbows. They looked very pale, and went along without taking the least notice of anything.

“These poor wretches,” said Emmanuel, “will perhaps be the first men in France some day; and the others you saw, with their women, and their smoking caps, their plaid trousers, and their long pipes, will come to solicit an audience of them, cap in hand, to beg a situation as tax-collector or juge-de-paix in some village.”

I thought it was very possible. How happy are those who have a hundred francs a month from their father and mother, so as to be able to follow their studies. Unfortunately the best will in the world is no use; you must have the hundred francs a month to begin with.

The old Sorbonne struck five, and as I stood there quite thoughtful, Emmanuel said,—

“Let us go to dinner now, and we will take a turn afterwards; we shall not have much time to see each other all the week, so we must make the best of the first day.”

He had taken hold of my arm again, and a few steps took us into a narrow, mouldy passage, as old as the streets; this passage ran behind the houses, and led to the Cloître Saint Benoit. It is more like the court of the old synagogue at Saverne, than any other place I saw in Paris.

This place was not even paved; it communicated with the Rue Saint Jacques by a sort of postern, with a post set in the middle to prevent vehicles from entering, and with the Rue des Mathurins Saint Jacques by a lane. How often have I



dined and breakfasted there with Emmanuel at Ober's !

Ober's restaurant was the only decent-looking house ; it was opposite the postern, clean, and nicely painted ; it had a row of windows on the ground floor, they belonged to the airy dining-rooms. In the middle room, on the left of the glass door, Monsieur Ober was seated at his counter ; he was an Alsatian, his nose was long, his eyes sharp, he wore a little flat cap and a black cravat, and, as we came in, he said,—

“You are one of the first to-day, M. Emmanuel,” and, at the same time he offered him his snuff-box.

The three dining-rooms opened into each other by two large folding doors, but there was scarcely anyone there. I noticed two or three young men seated at the little tables, right and left, at their dinners, and it was

the first time I ever saw people read while they were eating. A good odour of cooking came through the dining-room on the left, and all at once I found I was hungry.

"Come, take a pinch," said M. Ober.

"Thank you," said Emmanuel, "I never take snuff."

"Oh, you have no bad habits," said M. Ober, looking at me.

"This is a friend from Saverne," said Emmanuel.

"Ah indeed! I am always glad to see anyone from our part of the world."

Then we passed into the dining-room on the right. Emmanuel hung up my cap and his own hat, and made me sit down opposite to him by the open windows.

"What shall we have?" he said. "A bottle of wine and some Seltzer water in the first place, for it is very warm; then

two soups and two beef-steaks, and then we will see, eh?"

"Listen, Emmanuel," I said, "you must not go to any expense on my account; a piece of bread, a slice of beef, and a drink of water is all I want."

But he was almost angry at that. "Water, indeed! beef, indeed! when I invite an old schoolfellow; do you take me for a miser?" And without hearing what I had to say, he called out,—

"Waiter, two 'Juliennes,' wine and Seltzer water."

I saw then that I must not say any more. A waiter, whose hair was carefully dressed and curled, and who was called John, brought us two plates of soup, the bottle of wine, and the Seltzer water; and we began to dine with great satisfaction.

This was my first dinner in Paris, and I

shall never forget it ; not only on account of the wine, and the meats, and the salad, but because of the friendship and kindness of Emmanuel, and also of other young students who came afterwards, and sat at the table where we were, and who all treated me like an acquaintance, when they heard we had been to school together. No ! I shall never forget it ; they were all clever fellows, and talked of all sorts of things—law, justice, medicine, history, and politics, with the greatest ease.

I did not understand a word ; but, however, I had the sense to remain silent.

A tall, thin fellow, named Sillery, held an argument with another, named Coquille, and two or three of Emmanuel's friends joined in ; how they laughed and raved ! New parties of twos and threes and sixes came in every minute, and before an hour

was over, the three rooms were full, and similar disputes going on round every table.

In the midst of it all, the plates clattered, the bottles and glasses chinked, and the waiters in their shirt-sleeves ran from table to table, or bawled at the kitchen door for "One beef," "Two asparagus," "One stewed kidney," "One beef-steak," "One bottle of sixteen," &c., &c.

As they ran, they carried in their hands three, four, or five plates at a time, and also bottles under their arms, but they let nothing fall, and they gave everyone exactly what he had ordered. I had never seen anything like it. The memory and extraordinary handiness of these servants surprised me still more than the disputes about government; and as I watched them, I began to understand what I had often heard M. Nivoi say,—“That at Paris

people did more in an hour than we did in the country in a day."

This was also where I first saw gas ; for as soon as it was getting dark, the waiters ran from burner to burner with a small wax taper, like the beacles in our church ; and beautiful white and blue lights in the shape of tulips flamed up in an instant above every table in the room. I have often wondered since, why they do not have these lights in the cathedrals, they are far more beautiful than the dull flame of the wax candles, and would be more acceptable to God.

The dinner, the wine, and the arguments lasted then till night set in, and then everybody got up to go. The students at our table shook hands with each other, and Emmanuel paid three francs at the counter. We had finished our repast with cauliflowers

dressed in oil, and the wine too had put us in good spirits, and we started with hearts full of joy and satisfaction.

We came to the old Cloître Saint-Benoit, by the Rue des Mathurins Saint-Jacques, and I was astonished to find, when we reached the quays, that they were more crowded even than in the day-time. The people had been working all day either at their homes or at their employers, and they came down from their sixth stories at night to get a breath of fresh air. I was told that afterwards, but when I saw the crowd there then, for the first time, I could not account for it.

We were stopped two or three times in the narrowest street by women, and when I was told what they were I was grieved to the heart. I looked at Emmanuel, for I could hardly believe such things existed ;

and it was only when we came in sight of the old bridge of Saint Michael, and the hundreds of lamps along the river side, whose reflections quivered on the water, and the long line of quays lying before me, that I forgot my sad impressions, and cried out—

“Oh! how beautiful this is! What a great place Paris must be!”

We went straight along the quays; those long lines of carriages waiting to be hired, those books ranged in cases all along the top of the hewn stone balustrade, where anybody can pick out what he wants; those great canvas-covered houses, floating on the river, where you may bathe; those boats like floating quarries, all filled with coal, and a hundred other things I saw, set me wondering at the ingenuity of mankind, and at their contrivances to make money.



"It is more beautiful than anything I could have thought of," I said.

"Wait a bit," Emmanuel replied, "you will see presently."

We went on a long way ; across the Pont-Neuf, and the court of the Louvre, where stood the statue of the Duke of Orleans, across the Rue Saint Honore, and many other streets, and I was not the least tired, I said to myself, this must come to an end soon to be sure.

Just as I was thinking so, we crossed a fine open court, surrounded with columns all round, and shut in by large iron gates, that were guarded by municipals, and that led us to an arcade, as wide as a street, all covered in with glass, lighted up as bright as day, and shops all round full of silver and gold, and crystal, and silks, and jewels.

This was the galerie d'Orléans and

till you have seen it, you can form no idea of what riches there are in the world.

But when we got farther on, to the Palais Royal, entirely surrounded as it was by arcades, lighted up with gas, where people could walk all day and be protected from the sun or the rain, and where there are hundreds of shops, one more beautiful than the other ; my arms fairly dropped down by my sides with astonishment. The interior of this place is cooled with fountains and planted with flower beds ; and Emmanuel took me round and explained everything to me ; but I did not listen to him, for my head was giddy at the sight of it all.

I remember, nevertheless, that when we were at the end of one of these galleries, blazing with light, and where the fronts of the shops are formed of a single pane of

glass, so clear, that you would think you could touch the gold watches, and pearl necklaces and diamond rings, and the bronze and marble timepieces representing flowers and figures, and horses and stags, all wrought in the highest perfection, and that you may stop and admire for weeks together.

He said to me—

“Stop here—that is Véfour’s.”

Then I looked in, and I saw, through the glass, a white marble basin full of small tortoises, and a *jet-d'eau* in its midst; and all round this basin were choice pears and apples, and other fruits; red, green, and yellow, with their leaves; and which my companion told me were pine-apples, pomegranates, green almonds, and other rarities from all parts of the world. Further back, behind a second glass,

there was game and fish of all kinds, and so beautifully fresh, that you would have thought it had just been shot in the woods, and just taken out of the river.

Emmanuel said the little tortoises were to make soup, and the plainest dinner you could have there would cost twenty francs.

I was indeed astonished to hear that ; I might spend all my sixty francs there in one day ! You may judge when I say that, what it was.

In a word, this Palais Royal was what struck me the most, altogether, on account of its great riches, and its arcades, and its gardens and its fountains.

We walked up and down for two hours ; one *gallerie*, at the end of the gallery d'Orleans, was full of cabinet-work. I stood admiring it a long time, despairing of ever being able to do anything like it ;

it seemed to me to be beyond my powers, and I found that M. Nivoi was quite right when he said that Paris was the place to find the cleverest workmen in the world.

Then we walked up the Boulevards, and certainly their appearance is more splendid by night than by day. There is the church of the Madeleine, further on the two\* Arcs de Triomphe, lines of gas lights, and crowds of people, as far as the eye can reach. It is impossible to give any idea of the beauty of this part of Paris ; as we were passing the end of a very broad street, Emmanuel stopped me to call out—“*La Colonne Vendôme*,” and in the distance I beheld, standing in the centre of a great open space, that dark-hued pillar with Napoleon on the top.

It was then fully eleven o'clock, and we

\* Porte Saint Denis and Porte Saint Martin.

were a long way from home ; so we started in that direction at a good pace.

Emmanuel knew his way as well as if he had been at Saverne. We went through more arcades, more lanes, and past many other shops, but I had seen so much, that I did not care for any of it.

I was glad enough to find myself at my door by midnight. There was a miserable lamp hanging over it. Emmanuel showed me how to ring, and when the latch was pulled back, he shook hands, saying—

“Well, good night, Jean-Pierre ; good bye. We shall see each other again on Sunday.”

“Yes,” I replied, much affected by his kind tone.

He took his way to the Sorbonne, and I went into the dark entry. The porter looked out of the pane in his lodge

window, to see who it was, and I climbed the stairs, well pleased to have got work the very first day.

I undressed myself by the moonlight that was shining in at my little window, thinking all the time of the things I had seen, and was fast asleep as soon as I was in bed.

## CHAPTER XV.

IT was just half-past five when I went down stairs the next morning, and I heard voices at the bottom calling out,\* “*Cordon*, if you please.”

Other workmen besides myself were going to their day’s labour; the porter pulled the string and we went out together without even looking at each other.

The population of Paris is not given to early rising; and, except the workmen and small tradesmen, who are busy sweeping

\* The porter pulls up the latch or bolt of the outer door, by means of a cord that terminates by his bed-side in his lodge.



their shops, or staring about in their shirt-sleeves, and the wine-shop keepers, who are busy serving the confirmed tipplers, who are their earliest customers, all the city is asleep at five in the morning.

The next afoot are the milk-women, who come in with their tin cans, and take their accustomed station under some door-way; the servant-maids then begin to appear, and the city street sweepers to make their way to their homes in companies, with their besoms over their shoulders.

I saw all this as I passed. The streets were dull and damp; but high up, the sun—the same glorious sun that gilds the fields and meadows, and the blooming and fruit-laden trees,—shone on the old chimneys and the mouldering roofs, and his beams slanted along the walls. How often, when I have seen him thus, have I fancied

how he shone far away in the country, on the dewy fields and woods, and orchards. How often has he not made me think of Saverne, and of Annette, and my dear mother Balais !

“ They are just going out now, this fine weather,” I used to say to myself.

Fine weather, indeed ! for those who dwell in the streets of Paris, that are more like chimneys than anything else. But what is to be said, we have all a different lot in life ; and those whose fate is to labour should be thankful to have work.

The clock was striking six as I entered Monsieur Bracconneau’s yard, — two or three of my fellow workmen were already in the workshop, in the act of hanging up their jackets or reaching down their tools. There was a quarter of an hour’s grace in the morning ; they looked at me, but did

not speak ; as I turned to them, an old man of about forty-five or fifty, with a long grizzled beard, high forehead, small eyes, and rather flat nose—the foreman, as I could see,—called out in a gay voice,—

“They rise early in your country, Alsacian.”

“Yes, master,” I replied, “we do our duty.”

“Duty, indeed !” said he ; “they want to earn their fifty sous and make sure of their dinners.”

Then the rest burst out laughing, and I got red in the face ; but I did not answer, for I did not know what to say.

Perrignon, the foreman, was always grumbling about something or other, and the workmen always listened to what he said, and agreed with him. I found out afterwards that he had been in prison for

his political opinions, and had even narrowly escaped the galleys, and that was why he was thought so much of in the neighbourhood.

Well!—we set to work. The packing-cases I had seen them busy on the day before, were to contain the consoles, and chests of drawers, and side-boards, that were there all ready in the shop; there were a great many other cases to be got off, and it was on those I was set to work.

Monsieur Braconneau came down in about half-an-hour. All the goods had to be packed into the cases with straw, and then loaded upon three waggons; it would have been a day's work in our country; by nine o'clock it was all done, and the waggons started.

After that we went to get our breakfast. I had made acquaintance with two of my

fellow workmen ; one named Valsy, a skilful tradesman, but who was almost always ailing ; and another named Quentin, who wore his cap on one side of his head, and whose tongue ran so continually, that Perrignon only could stop it by calling out to him that we were stunned by his chatter.

We all went slowly down the street together in our jackets, Perrignon the last—we always called him Monsieur Perrignon in the street,—he had on a large brown cape, and wore a hat, and his fine beard added to his very respectable appearance.

We stopped at the first baker's on the right, and each of us bought our bread ; and a little lower down, at the corner of the Rue Serpente, we all went into an eating-house that they called the *caboulot*.

I must try to describe this place, for

there are many like it in Paris, where journeymen of all trades, carpenters, cabinet-makers, jewellers, masons and others, go to take their meals. Our *caboulot* was on the same level as the street, and there were two rooms divided by a glazed partition, which was fitted with small curtains. On one side of it was the table where the painters, engravers, and *journalists* sat: for these are grand trades, at which seven, eight, and even ten francs a day can be earned; and on the other side, was where the masons and the bakers and cabinet-makers sat.

As a matter of course, they paid twice as dear on the left as on the right, for there were table-cloths on their tables; and besides, everybody ought to be charged according to his means. That is why we never went with the painters and the

journalists. We got our slice of beef, vegetables, and half a measure of wine for fifteen sous, and they paid thirty. I ought to add, that their room was painted green, and that ours was not painted at all, but we did not mind that.

The kitchen was at the end of our room ; it was a dark little place, where a candle was kept burning all day ; and there stood Madame Graindorge, busy pouring out our soup for us, as we sat shoulder to shoulder waiting for it. She was a good woman from the Vosges ; with plump cheeks, sparkling eyes, white teeth, and a double chin ; and was continually coming and going, laughing first with one, and then with the other, and now and then peeping under a corner of the curtain [of the journalist's room, to see what was going on.

Madame Graindorge had a servant girl to help her ; a good fellow named Armard too, a wood-carver by trade, lent her a hand sometimes ; he was square set, his nose was rather red, and his manners rather rough, but he had a good heart all the same.

We ate in silence, while the painters and journalists and their party wrangled and screamed like so many jays caught with bird-lime. We heard all they had to say about the king, the ministers, the chambers, and all the rascals, as they called every one holding a place under the government ; from the foresters to M. Guizot.

It was against M. Guizot they mostly spoke ; that gave us a lesson in politics, so that we did not require to read the newspapers, we knew all that was in them beforehand ; and sometimes, when



a journalist was heard declaring that the public money was mis-appropriated, or the nation insulted, Father Perrignon would give us a wink, and whisper—

“Listen to that one, he argues well, he knows what he is talking about, he is the cleverest of the lot.”

We should have liked to stay there all day listening to their disputes ; but we were obliged to go back to work at a quarter to ten ; fortunately there were almost always some of them still there when we came back to dinner, and so hoarse were they, that if Madame Graindorge had not always made a point of leaving their door ajar, we could not have heard what they said.

I have often thought that if we had had deputies like them, matters might have turned out otherwise.

But to come back to my first day. As soon as we had done breakfast, Perrignon said to me all of a sudden—

“What will you stand, Alsacian?”

“Whatever you please,” I answered, rather surprised.

Then he smiled, and said—

“I do not speak for myself only, you must pay your footing all round.”

“That is what I am ready to do, Monsieur Perrignon, I replied, according to my means, be it understood, for I am not rich.”

“Oh, a fellow can always find the means if he has the will,” said he.

And turning to the rest: “Well, what will you call for?” he said, “you must not be too hard on the young chap.”

One said a glass of brandy, and another curaçao; but old Perrignon said “No, no!

we will have a glass of wine all round. Two bottles at sixteen sous, Madame Graindorge."

The bottles were brought, and I filled the glasses, they drank to my health, and I drank to theirs, and then having paid, we went out. Monsieur Perrignon appeared pleased with me, and from that time he never called me Alsatian, but "the little one." The rest, too, were very civil to me from that hour ; but they all knew more of their trade than I did, for they had been three or four years in Paris, and I had just come from Saverne. I was grieved to see this, not that I was envious, God forbid ! but I kept asking myself,—“Do you think you earn your three francs a day ? Do you think your master can keep you on ?”

And I was obliged to answer, no. No matter how hard I worked, or how much

pains I took, I was always behind the rest. I was miserable about it ; I either did not sleep at night, or else awoke thinking.

If my master were to dismiss me that day, it is only what I might expect, and then what would become of me ?

I dreaded pay-day, for that is when those who are not required get their discharge.

Yes ! I dreaded it, for my money was getting low.

At last the Saturday of my second week came round ; Monsieur Braconneau and Perrignon stood talking together, and I looked on in the greatest anxiety. When my turn came, the master counted me down twenty-seven francs, without a word ; but for all that, I was afraid he would call me back, and begin—

“ We have less and less work,” &c. &c.

And it was only when I was fairly

out of the yard, that I began to breathe freely.

I was already a good way up the street, when I heard Perrignon's voice calling after me,—“Hallo, little one ! don't go so fast.”

I turned round in fear ; the good man came up smiling.

“Why, you go at such a rate,” he said, “anybody would think you were running away.”

His merry looks set me at ease, and I laughed too.

“You do not seem out of temper to-night,” said he, taking hold of my arm.

“I never am, Monsieur Perrignon.”

“Never ? not when you set to with clenched teeth, and plane away like mad to get up with the rest ?”

Then I felt quite ashamed—he had seen what labour it cost me.

“Aye,” said he, “little one, that is how it is when folks have no confidence in their elders, and fancy they know everything, and are too proud to ask anybody’s advice ; they must go on slaving in their own way from morning to night. It is a good sort of pride, and shows a determined temper, but it is not the best way to get on, all the same.”

“Oh,” I said, “I did not dare to ask your advice.”

“You did not dare ? Do I look so savage, then ?” and he seemed almost angry ; but he recovered himself directly, and said, “You treated me to a glass of wine the other day, and you must accept one of me to-night. I was going home to the Rue Clovis, to supper, with my wife and children as usual ; but I have some small accounts to settle in this neighbourhood, and besides, I want to have a talk with you.”

“Will you allow me to do your business for you?” I said.

“No, I will do it myself. I am anxious to give you a little good advice, that you may act on it at once.”


I was quite affected by this proof of kindness ; when you are all alone in a strange place, your heart warms to any one that offers you a helping hand.

We had just reached the *caboulot* by this time, and we turned in. It was about half-past seven, Monsieur Armand was mounted on a chair, cleaning the lamps, and the bakers were having their supper, before setting off to knead the bread till two in the morning.

Monsieur Perrignon called for a bottle of wine, and we sat down at one of the tables, and then he talked to me a long while about our trade, pointing out that every

town and village had its own set fashion of working.

“But at Paris,” he said, “nothing stands still, things change and improve. I have no doubt that Monsieur Nivoi was a first-rate workman in his time, but there have been many improvements in fifteen years. There is something new found out every day among the vast number of people employed; first one, and then another, discovers a means of doing better or quicker, and all profit by the discovery. Now you naturally do as you did at Saverne; for example, you measure everything with the string instead of the compass; it answers the same purpose, but you have got to measure much more carefully, and that takes a few minutes longer every time, and that makes hours in the day, to say nothing of the trouble you give yourself, and the





annoyance you feel to find yourself always behind the rest."

"Ah, that is what I care for the most," I answered.

He laughed, and said,—“Well, little one, begin by throwing away your string, and if you meet with a difficulty, just make a sign to me.”

“Oh, Monsieur Perrignon!” I cried, “how happy it would make me if I ever could do anything to render you a service.”

“Oh, we never can tell,” he said, “what may happen; it is our duty to help one another, and if you have the chance, at a future day, and do for others what I do for you, we shall be quits.”

Thereupon the good man took his hat off the nail, and we went out. He shook hands with me, and took his way through the Rue Serpente, and I mine through the

Rue de la Harpe. If Monsieur Perrignon had never done me any other service but this, I should never forget him.

A great happiness was in store for me that night. My first care had been to procure pen and ink and paper, and to write and tell Madame Balais that all was well, that Monsieur Nivoi's letter had procured me work, that Emmanuel had proved himself the same good fellow as when we were at Saverne ; and that I only wanted a letter from her to make me quite happy.

Well, when I came to the end of our dark passage, just as I was going up stairs, the porter opened his window-pane, and called out—

“ Monsieur Jean-Pierre Clavel.”

“ What is it, Monsieur Trubère ?”

“ Here is a letter for you.”

I took the letter in great agitation, but

as soon as I saw by the light of the dingy lamp that the direction was in Madame Balais' hand, I felt relieved, and I went upstairs so fast, that in two minutes I had my lamp lighted, and was sitting on my bed-side, shedding warm tears over all the good creature told me, about her health and the effort she had made to conquer her grief at my departure ; her pleasure to hear I was employed, and her hopes that we should meet again some time or other.

She told me, too, that the Dubourgs had returned with all their aunt Jacqueline's plate and jewels, and that the other property exceeded what was at first thought. But all that was indifferent to me ; I turned my thoughts from them, and said to myself,—

“ You have nobody to thank for anything but Madame Balais ; it was she who

brought you up, and she only loves you now, and you should care for nobody else.

“What can the Dubourgs be to you ? If they were twice as rich as they are, they would only be still more ready to forget their old friends ; but Jean-Pierre, you owe your labour, and your life itself, to her who befriended you. Try then to get on, to be able to send for your mother Balais, and to render her, as far as is in your power, all she has done for you. There lies your duty and your happiness, you must forget all the rest.”

I lay down with these reflections, and was soon asleep.

END OF VOL. I.





